



US AS A FACTOR IN SINO-INDIA RELATIONS IN POST COLD WAR ERA

THESIS

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Dr. Mohammad Mohibul Haque
(SUPERVISOR)

**Dedicated
To My
Beloved Sister
Late Rohi Jan**

PREFACE

This thesis attempts to examine the question of how the United States (U.S.) as a factor is an intervening variable in the Sino-Indian relations particularly in the post-Cold War era. This question assumes significance in the context that in recent years the U.S. has come to occupy some degree of strategic space in Sino-Indian relations. It has become a factor which is linked with other issues and strategic consideration concerning the national interests of India and China. The problem also assumes special importance because in the contemporary world, the United States, although a declining power, is still a dominant actor with tremendous political, economic and military outreach in every part of the world. On the other hand, China and India are the two most important developing countries characterized by their positive economic growth, thriving populations, growing military prowess, and expanding domestic markets which is thought to serve as the engine of growth for the world economy.

The time period of this study is confined to the post-Cold War era because with the end of the Cold War, the national identities and interests as well as the foreign policies of China, India and the United States witnessed drastic changes and realignments. For instance, during the Cold War period, Indo-U.S. relations were often characterized by phrases such as "estrangement", "antagonism", "confrontation", "dialogue of deaf", etc. due to the Pakistan, Soviet Union and China factor. However, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, all reasons of estrangement vanished and it took a very short time to bring bilateral relations between India and the U.S. to the level of strategic partnership. This emerging partnership between the United States and India is based on shared values of democracy, counter-terrorism, economic and defense cooperation, and above all the mutual unease about the long term implications of the rise of China.

Similarly, during the Cold War, the relationship between China and the U.S. was characterized first by the ideological rivalry and then by the strategic partnership vis-a-vis the common adversary, the Soviet Union. However, in the post-Cold War era, their relationship has vacillated sometimes in cooperation and sometimes in competition due to the complexity of their relationship. For instance, while the U.S. President Bill Clinton

termed China as "strategic partner", the Bush (Junior) administration labeled China first as "strategic competitor" and then dubbed it as a "responsible stake holder". The United States views the rise of China as a threat to its established supremacy whereas China perceives that the U.S. is determined to thwart its rise by the containment policy in collaboration with other likeminded nations such as India, Japan, Vietnam, etc.

It is within the perspectives of these changing dynamics and imperatives of the post-Cold War era that the present study focuses extensively on India's and China's relations with the United States respectively to demonstrate how it affects the interests and security perceptions of China and India and thereby to elucidate the U.S. factor in Sino-Indian relations.

The classification of chapters of this thesis is generally on the basis of its necessity and relevance. The whole study is divided into six chapters.

Chapter-I is divided into two main parts. The first part deals with the general introduction such as significance and objectives of the study, hypothesis, research questions, methodology and sources of data. The second part provides the theoretical framework of the study wherein three major theories of International Relations (Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism) have been applied to explain the problem under investigation.

Chapter-II deals with the historical overview of the Cold War Super Power rivalry (the U.S. and the Soviet Union) and their impact on Sino-Indian relations. Though the scope of this study is limited to the post-Cold War era, the main aim of this chapter is to supplement the present study with historical perspectives in order to understand and connect the contemporary dynamics related to the problem under study.

Chapter-III deals with the Indo-U.S. strategic cooperation and China's predicaments. It traces the evolution of Indo-U.S. relationship from estranged democracies to engaged democracies. However, the main focus of this chapter is to demonstrate how the growing Indo-U.S. strategic cooperation is motivated by China factor and, thereby, how China perceives the growing Indo-U.S. strategic partnership.

Chapter-IV analyses the U.S.-China strategic cooperation and/or competition. It highlights the various areas of cooperation and competition between China and the U.S. and on the basis of this analysis an attempt has been made to determine the nature of their relationship. It also focuses on how India responds or perceives the growing cooperation between China and the United States on various global issues. Likewise, it also analyses India's stand on the issues where U.S.-China interests clash with each other.

Chapter-V assesses the prospects of strategic triangle between China, India and the U.S. in the emerging multipolar world order. After providing a brief outline of theoretical framework related to strategic triangles in IR, the chapter proceeds further to answer three important questions viz., is there any possibility of strategic alliance between the two states against the third state; will the United States as a dominant actor play off one Asian giant against the other; and, is there any possibility of win-win cooperation among the three states on common issues such as climate change, global terrorism, global economic stability, etc. It also provides a brief outline of convergence of interests between China and India and the nature of U.S. apprehensions relating to such cooperation.

Chapter-VI is the concluding part of this thesis which is further divided into two parts. The first part summarizes the whole discussion and the second part highlights the main observations/findings of the study.

The scope of this study is limited. There is a plethora of literature on Sino-Indian relations on topics such as political, economic, and security relations, and on many other important issues like border problem and the Pakistan factor. Instead of working on them, this study has focused in a comprehensive way on each state's relations with the United States - economically, politically, and strategically in the post-Cold War era in order to determine how such interactions and dynamics acts as a factor (positive or negative) on Sino-Indian relations.

It is hoped that this thesis makes a substantive and humble contribution to the study on U.S. as a factor in Sino-Indian relations.

Aligarh

Mehraj Uddin Gojree

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADIZ	Air Defense Identification Zone
AECA	Arms Exporting Control Act
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BDCA	Border Defense Cooperation Agreement
BIT	Bilateral Investment Treaty
BJP	Bhartiya Janta Party
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defense
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India and China
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India China and South Africa
CBM	Confidence Building Measures
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CENT-COM	Central Command
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CPEC	China Pakistan Economic Corridor
CPI-M	Communist Party of India-Marxist
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
DCG	Defense Consultation Group
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
DoD	Department of Defense
DPG	Defense Policy Group
DSATA	Diplomatic Security Anti-Terrorism Assistance
DTTI	Defense Technology and Trade Initiatives

EAS	East Asia Summit
ECS	East China Sea
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ESG	Extensive Steering Group
ETIM	East Turkestan Islamic Movement
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FMS	Foreign Military Sale
FTAAP	Free Trade of Asia and the Pacific
G-20	Group of 20
G-33	Group of 33
G-8	Group of 8
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GHG	Green House Gases
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IEA	International Energy Agency
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOR	Indian Ocean Region
IP	Internet Protocol
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
IPRP	Intellectual Property Rights Protection
IR	International Relations
JDPG	Joint Defense Policy Group
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
JTG	Joint Technical Group
JWG	Joint Working Group
LAC	Line of Actual Control
LeT	Lashker-e-Toiba

MAD	Mutual Assured Destruction
MFN	Most Favored Nation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSR	Maritime Silk Road
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCI	National Counter Intelligence
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NFA	Northeast Frontier Agencies
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
NSSP	Next Steps in Strategic Partnership
OBOR	One Belt One Road
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PoW	Prisoners of War
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSI	Proliferation Security Initiative
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive and Economic Partnership
RDF	Rapid Deployment Forces
S&ED	Strategic and Economic Dialogue
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SCS	South China Sea
SEATO	South East Asian Treaty Organization
SREB	Silk Road Economic Belt
SSD	Strategic Security Dialogue
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
TMD	Theater Missile Defense
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership

T-TIP	Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
US	The United States
USITC	United States International Trade Commission
WB	World Bank
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization

ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to examine the question of how the United States (U.S.) as a factor is an intervening variable in the Sino-Indian relations particularly in the post-Cold War era. This question assumes significance in the context that in recent years the U.S. has come to occupy some degree of strategic space in Sino-Indian relations. It has become a factor which is linked with other issues and strategic consideration concerning the national interests of India and China. The problem also assumes special importance because in the contemporary world, the United States, although a declining power, is still a dominant actor with tremendous political, economic and military outreach in every part of the world. On the other hand, China and India are the two most important developing countries characterized by their positive economic growth, thriving populations, growing military prowess, and expanding domestic markets which is believed to serve as the engine of growth for the world economy.

Since the end of the Cold War, the world order has witnessed and is increasingly shaped by new trends. The shift of power from West to East, the advent of globalization, and the emergence of mutual economic interdependence have been important factors in determining and influencing the policies of each state. These new trends have given rise to the new 'emerging powers' paving the way for multipolarity in the current configuration of global politics. Among these emerging powers, some have acquired or are acquiring, wider global significance. These include most obviously China, India, Russia, Brazil, South Africa, Japan, European Union, and others. However, among all these powers, the most significant are China and India that may be important strategic partners, or may rival or even replace the United States as the dominant powers in the coming decades.

China's rise has been based upon its rapid economic progress since the introduction of market reforms in 1978 under Deng Xiaoping. Due to the annual growth rates of between eight to ten percent since the last three decades, China became the world's second largest economy after the United States in 2010. China has also growing military capacity being second only to the United States in terms of arms expenditure. Moreover, China's emerging global role is evident in the influence it exerts within the World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Security Council (UNSC), G-20 and on global issues such as climate change, nuclear proliferation (in

case of Iran and North Korea) as well as its growing influence in the resource rich areas of Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East.

The transformation of India into an emerging power has been based on economic growth rates only marginally less impressive than China's. India's increased growth rates stem from the introduction of economic reforms in the early 1990s more than a decade after China's market reforms. Growing by 7.46 percent annually, the Indian economy is projected to become the world's third largest economy after China and the U.S. by 2030. Moreover, India's vital position in South Asia, its strategic position between Western Asia and South East Asia, its defence capabilities including nuclear weapons and increasing blue water navy and, above all, its emergence as a rival economic power to China, gives it an influential place in global politics.

Currently, these two Asian giants account for nearly 40 percent of world's population, and it is projected by the *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* report that by 2025, India and China will be the first and second largest populous countries in the world respectively. It is also estimated that if the current trend persists, by 2020 China and India will jointly account for half of the world's gross domestic product (GDP). Their rapid and broad based growth is altering trade and geostrategic relations in the region and beyond. Being the important members of the G-20, their influence will manifest in the global security, global politics, and in global economic environment. Each state's role in the international arena will also be affected by the nature of the interactions that develop between them.

In spite of sharing a glorious civilizational past, security competition between these two Asian giants is inevitable as their economies and military power grow within the same geographical space. The broad spectrum of emerging issues which exist between China and India are border dispute, Pakistan factor, establishing nuclear deterrence and political and economic influence in Asia and other parts of the world. This explains the competitive part of their relationship. At the same time, their perceptions of being emerging and rising states and their national goals of economic development lay the ground for their cooperative approach towards each other. This explains their increasing cooperative behaviour on many issues.

In both these cases as mentioned above, the United States plays an important role. The U.S factor in Sino-Indian relations assumes significance from two

perspectives - first from the Sino-Indian perspective and second from the U.S. perspective itself. From the Sino-Indian perspective, though both the Asian giants aspire to promote multipolarity and resent the U.S. unilateralism and hegemony, both need the U.S. support for their economic development, technological transfer, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, access to the U.S. markets and other inducements. Their national goals of achieving great power status would remain an unaccomplished task without the active support and cooperation of the United States. With these aims of securing the U.S. support for the accomplishment of their respective goals, when one Asian giant tries to forge close cooperation with the United States, it creates strategic apprehensions and the fear of hostile alignment in the minds of another Asian giant. The fear of hostile alignment is more visible in China than in India because Indo-U.S. issues are not as intense and deep as are witnessed between China and the U.S. as well as between India and China. Moreover, both India and the United States are apprehensive about the intentions and unpredictable behaviour of China. India's coming close to the U.S. is considered in China as being motivated by the Indian desire to help the U.S.' containment policy vis-a-vis China. Thus due to this U.S. factor, the competitive elements in Sino-Indian relations gets further intensified.

Second, as the two biggest emerging powers, the rise of China and India has attracted closer attention from the United States, the dominant (although declining) power in international system. The U.S. is concerned not only with the spread of growth in China and India but also the development of relations between them. As the rise of China and India could eventually result in a realignment of international order by creating multiple poles of power and influence, the U.S. will face increased challenges to its military, economic, political, and cultural hegemony. In such a scenario, the U.S. will be constrained in policy tools it can use unilaterally and will need to incorporate in its policy process the greater influence that China and India will have with nations and within international institutions. More pertinently, China is the biggest challenger among them as it has the great potential to replace the U.S. as a dominant power in the coming decades if the pace of its development continues uninterrupted.

Moreover, though the United States is not geographically the part of Asian continent, it is the only power with global reach as it has extensive political, economic, and security interests as well as military presence in every region of Asia -

East Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, South and South East Asia, and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). It also enjoys security, economic and commercial ties and interests with most of the Asian countries and most of the Asian developments are influenced by its policies and actions. In such a complex situation, the rapid rise of China, if not managed successfully, will eventually alter the global balance of power and institutions in ways that are not in consonance with the U.S. desired interests and values. Therefore, the U.S. is playing an important role in cultivating India as a strategic partner to realize its goal of remaining firmly embedded in Asia at a time when the continent is emerging as the world's new centre of gravity and where China is emerging as a formidable challenge to the U.S. interests.

It is within the contextual frameworks of these developments in the post-Cold War era, that this study seeks to analyse and examine diverse aspects related to the problem under investigation. This is to understand how Sino-Indian relations are affected by the changing dynamics of global politics and especially by the U.S. factor.

Objectives of the Study

This thesis aims to determine the extent to which the U.S. as a factor is an intervening variable in the multifaceted Sino-Indian relations particularly in the post-Cold War era. In addition to this main objective, the other objectives of the study would be:

1. To investigate the impact of the Super Power rivalry (the U.S. and the Soviet Union) on the Sino-Indian relations during the Cold War period. It aims to provide the historical framework to better understand the impact of current dynamics of external factors (the U.S.) on Sino-Indian relationships.
2. To investigate the U.S.' interests and policies towards China and India and in turn India's and China's policies and interests towards the U.S. in the post-Cold War era.
3. To investigate the motivations and strategic rationale behind the Indo-U.S. Strategic Partnership and China's perceptions towards it.
4. To examine and analyze the nature and scope of U.S.-China relationship and India's responses towards it.
5. To evaluate the prospects of the emergence of the strategic triangle between the U.S., China and India in the current multipolar world order.

Hypothesis

The study is designed to examine and analyse the - *U.S. as a Factor in Sino-India Relations in Post Cold War Era*. In order to obtain better perspectives on the problem under investigation, the study proceeds from a main hypothesis: "In the complex type of Sino-Indian relations, the U.S. has emerged as a strong and dominant intervening variable in the post-Cold War era. India and China view their relation with the United States as a critical ingredient of their strategic interests. Also the unprecedented rise of China and thereby the 'China threat' is one of the factors responsible for the Indo-U.S. Strategic Partnership".

Research Questions

The study attempts to probe the following questions:

1. How will the U.S. strategic relationship with India be influenced by the rise of China?
2. What are China's responses/perceptions to the growing Indo-U.S. strategic cooperation?
3. How does the U.S.-China cooperation or competition affect India's security interests and in both cases what are India's responses?
4. To what extent the three countries interact with each other in the triangular framework?
5. Is there any possibility of an alignment of the two countries against the third one or will the three countries forge a cooperative or win-win cooperation?
6. And lastly, will the U.S. as an intervening variable try to mediate in emerging rivalry between China and India or will it placate one Asian rival against another for its own interests?

Methodology

In order to explore answers to the critical questions as mentioned above, the methods applied in this study are historical, analytical, descriptive and comparative. Although, the study is confined to the post-Cold War era, the historical method has been used with a view to analyze the impact of Super Power rivalry (the U.S. and the Soviet Union) and their impact on Sino-Indian relations during the Cold War period to understand and appreciate the current dynamics of the U.S. factor in Sino-Indian

relations. In addition to it, the content analysis method has also been applied frequently throughout the study to critically evaluate the particular events related to the problem under investigation.

Sources of Data

A wide array of information obtained both from the primary and secondary sources have been used in this study. In this regard, the governmental annual reports and press releases; documents related to the joint statements by the heads of the states; the speeches and the statements of the heads of the states and other policy-makers; monographs, reports, and issue briefs by the think tanks; books; articles from renowned journals; newspaper articles and editorials, etc. were collected, collated and used for arriving at conclusions in an objective way.

The scope of this study is limited. There is a plethora of literature on Sino-Indian relations on topics such as political, economic, and security relations, and on many other important issues like border problem and the Pakistan factor. Instead of working on them, this study has focused in a comprehensive way on each state's relations with the United States - economically, politically, and strategically in the post-Cold War era in order to determine how such interactions and dynamics acts as a factor (positive or negative) on Sino-Indian relations.

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Chapter-IV analyses the U.S.-China strategic cooperation and/or competition. It highlights the various areas of cooperation and competition between China and the U.S. and on the basis of this analysis an attempt has been made to determine the nature of their relations. It also focuses on how India responds or perceives the growing cooperation between China and the United States on various global issues. Likewise, it also analyses India's stand on the issues where U.S.-China interests clash with each other.

Chapter-V assesses the prospects of strategic triangle between China, India and the U.S. in the emerging multipolar world order. After providing a brief outline of theoretical framework related to strategic triangles in IR, the chapter proceeds further to answer three important questions viz., Is there any possibility of strategic alliance between the two states against the third state? Will the United States as a dominant actor play off one Asian giant against the other? and, Is there any possibility of win-win cooperation among the three states on common issues such as climate change, global terrorism and global economic stability? It also provides a brief outline of convergence of interests between China and India and the nature of the U.S. apprehensions relating to such cooperation.

Chapter-VI is the concluding part of this thesis which is further divided into two parts. The first part summarizes the whole discussion and the second part highlights the main observations/findings of the study.

In this study it is argued that Sino-Indian relations which are essentially of a bilateral nature, are also shaped by multiple interplay of regional factors as well as dynamics of global politics. Even during the Cold War period, the Sino-Indian relations were not immune from the U.S.-Soviet rivalry and thereby the international political setting affected both China and India. In other words, Sino-Indian cooperation and later on

rivalry were intertwined with the Soviet-American-Chinese triangular relations within the context of the global Cold War. In the post Cold War era, it was the United States (the sole Super Power) which emerged as a major factor in Sino-Indian relations. Since it is not an easy task to reach to a clear-cut conclusion on such a convoluted and vast foray of bilateral relations in the context of external factors, the concluding part of this thesis has been restricted to enlist general findings of the study.

Main Findings of the Study

In the light of preceding discussion, the major findings of this study can be highlighted under the following points:

China's Interests

- China's main aim in the trilateral relations is to check Indo-U.S. strategic partnership becoming too "China-centric". China is concerned about the U.S. attempts to contain it and the profound effect on its security of an eventual integration of India into a U.S. alliance system.
- To deal with this eventuality, China has adopted two-pronged strategy, vis., (a) promoting good and cooperative relations with both India and the U.S. and at the same time, (b) taken some measures to deal with any potential threat emerging either from the United States or India or from the both.
- In the latter case, it has demonstrated to the Indian policy-makers that if New Delhi gets too intimate toward the United States, it can also intensify its measures contrary to Indian interests by enhancing and boasting Pakistan's nuclear and missile development programs, deployment of powerful military forces along the Sino-Indian border and enhance its strategic presence in India's backyard especially in Burma, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh.

Policy Options

- In the present circumstances, China's policy is to maintain cooperative relations with both India and the U.S. in spite of the fact that Beijing perceives Indo-U.S. growing strategic partnership as an evolving strategy for the containment of the rise of China. China has been maintaining this policy from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping. It can be reflected from the fact that China has sought to down-play the conflicting areas with both India and the U.S. and

emphasized more on the cooperative areas. For instance, on the Sino-Indian border dispute which is one of the most intricate and historical issue between China and India, the two countries have been successful in maintaining an overall peace and tranquility along the Sino-Indian border. Border Defense Cooperation Agreement (BDCA) is the latest example in this direction which was signed in 2013 between Indian and China through which both Asian giants reached a comprehensive agreement "to avoid border tensions and army face-offs along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) by deciding that neither side will use military capability to attack other side". Similarly, cooperation with the U.S. is essential for the success of China's economic development drive which it has cultivated so cautiously since the economic reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. It would not like to destabilize its growth and economic development by antagonizing either India or the U.S.

- Although, China may at some time align with India vis-a-vis the United States, the main aim of forging such an alliance will be to keep New Delhi at away from Washington as Sino-Indian cooperation against the United States naturally deviate the idea of Indo-U.S. "natural alliance" based on shared and common values like democracy, rule of law, etc.
- However, it is also observed that for China the cooperation with the United States is far more advantageous than an alignment with India against Washington. It is due to the fact that close relationship with Washington would naturally result in identical interests between China and the U.S. In such a situation, the U.S. in collaboration with China will turn blind eye towards India's aspiration of playing an enhanced role in the UN Security Council or other international decision-making bodies. Moreover, cooperation with Washington in Asia would be a very big step toward the Chinese goal of being accepted as a peer of the United States in the global power structure. In this way, India's ability to emerge as a peer competitor to China would also be restricted to a great extent.

India's Interests

- From India's perspective, the main aim/interest within the trilateral framework is to avert U.S.-China cooperation that may be perceived as contrary to the Indian interests. There are several instances of such U.S.-China cooperation in

the past against India and there is possibility that such happening may occur in the future also given the roller coaster nature of U.S.-China relations. For instance, during India's nuclear tests in May 1998, the U.S. in collusion with China pressed India to accept non-nuclear status which was altogether resented by the Indian policy-makers. India does not want to see China as dominant power in South Asia with the U.S.' blessings.

- On the other side, India's main motive of close relationship with the U.S. is to play on Chinese fears of New Delhi's aligning with Washington in "anti-China" schemes to make Beijing understand India's sensitivities of China's increasing presence in the India Ocean Region (IOR) or in South Asia as a whole. India is particularly concerned over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which runs through Pakistan controlled Kashmir, China's nuclear and missile technology assistance to Pakistan, increasing naval presence in the Indian Ocean, construction of military ports along the Indian periphery, intrusions and assertive behavior on the Sino-Indian border, China's diversion of rivers which flow from China to India, etc. In the past, India did not have much influence to press China to halt such anti-India activities. However, in the present context, the emerging Indo-U.S. strategic partnership has increased India's influence vis-a-vis China which can be an effective instrument to pressurize China from becoming too assertive against Indian interests.
- Conversely, New Delhi also wants to play on U.S' fears over Beijing's military and economic ascent and thereby secure Washington's support and understanding in making India a pre-eminent power in the region by enhancing its defense capabilities via transfer of advanced military hardware and technology. India also wants to secure U.S. support in various international elite bodies like getting the permanent membership in the UN Security Council.

Policy Options

- Just like China, India also aspires to emerge as one of the leading international actors - militarily, economically, and politically. Given this fact, in conjunction with other factors which have been dealt at length in the earlier

chapters, India will not be interested in close alignment with the United States against China.

- The main objective of India's policy of forging a strategic partnership with the United States is to moderate China's behavior and accordingly compel her to accept a relationship compatible with India's basic security concerns.
- At the same time, Indian policy-makers are aware of the fact that too much closeness with Washington may be counterproductive to the Indian interests as it would compel Beijing to hurt Indian interests in a number of ways.
- It is also observed that New Delhi could be expected to move away from Washington if Beijing willingly accepts India's desired and rightful status in South Asia and in other international forums.

The U.S. Interests

- As noted in the preceding chapters, China's conflict with both India (over Pakistan and the border) and with the United States (over Taiwan, the U.S.' role in the world and the rise of China) are far deeper than the issues between New Delhi and the Washington. With these facts, it is observed that the U.S.' strategic interests lies in forging deep and closer strategic partnership with New Delhi in order to counter balance the rise of China in the long run.
- Though the Indo-U.S. strategic cooperation (which has its own dynamics and merits) cannot be attributed entirely to China, it emerges that China's rapid military and economic rise and thereby its ambitions constitute one important element of the new U.S.' inclination toward New Delhi.

Policy Options

- So far as the U.S. policy towards India and China is concerned, it will feel more comfortable with New Delhi than with Beijing. It would place greater stress on the importance and the role of India in the world and thereby treat India on equal terms with China.
- But at the same time, the U.S. policy-makers are not interested in forging a firm alliance with India against Beijing because doing so would put both New Delhi and Washington on antagonistic and hostile mode with China that would neither be in the interests of India nor in the interests of the United States.

- Moreover, as rightly pointed out by Harry Harding (a prominent U.S.-China expert) an active and formal New Delhi-Washington combination against Beijing could also imply a U.S. commitment to India's security that might be too costly for the U.S. It also means an Indian dependence on the U.S. that would be unacceptable to India.

Thus from the above discussion it can be concluded that the United States has emerged as a strong factor in the Sino-Indian relations in the post-Cold War period due to the fact that both China and India have been bidding against each other for the U.S. support. In other words, it can be said that the United States has emerged as a powerful external intervening variable in the complex Sino-Indian relationship. In this emerging triangular dynamics, the two Asian giants are caught in a security dilemma as one Asian giant's cooperation with the U.S. is perceived by other giant as going against her interests. Though the economic interdependence and convergence on various common issues has provided a solid ground for cooperation among the three powers, the security competition and the strategic distrust remains intact. The future course of relationship between China and India and thereby their relations with the United States will depend to a great extent on how China's leadership projects and uses its power and influence once it achieves its target of great power status. For example, will it treat India as a peer competitor in Asia and thereby work for its containment? Or will it accommodate and respect India's aspirations and interests in the South Asian? These are the questions which will determine much of the dynamics in Sino-Indian interactions. Similarly, if the United States perceives (under power transition perspective) that China's final ascent is aimed at to displace the United States as an established power in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, it will align with its allies (Australia, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, etc.) and with strategic partners (India, Singapore, Philippines, etc.) to contain China. Such an eventuality will lead to an extremely destabilizing situation which will be a catastrophe for the regional and global peace and stability. To avert such a dangerous eventuality, the U.S. as a dominant intervening variable in the Sino-Indian relationship can play a constructive role if, it;

- treats India and China as rising powers and positively accepts that their rise would be defining feature in the twenty first century devoid of manifested suspicion particularly with China with whom many common interests do exit.

- forges close and cooperative relations with each of the Asian powers on the basis of its own merits devoid of zero-sum terms.
- and, more pertinently, nudge both New Delhi and Beijing to develop win-win relationship with each other and at the same time makes it certain that its own relations with each of the two Asian giants will be better than each country's relation with other. It will ensure or at least subside Washington's suspicion or perceived apprehension of Sino-Indian alignment against the United States. It will ultimately reduce U.S.' game of playing off one Asian rival against another which it has played on various occasions in the post-Cold War era.

Chapter-I

Introduction

Sino-Indian relations although essentially bilateral in nature, has been influenced and even greatly shaped by the external factors. It is a complex and multifaceted relationship which is conditioned both by their bilateral imperatives as well as by the evolving dynamics of politics at the global level. In the external context, the United States occupies some degree of strategic space in the Sino-Indian relations. This thesis seeks to examine and analyze the extent to which the United States as a factor is an intervening variable in the multifaceted Sino-Indian relations particularly in the post-Cold War era.

Since the end of the Cold War, the world order has witnessed and is increasingly shaped by new trends. The shift of power from West to East, the advent of globalization, and the emergence of mutual economic interdependence have been important factors in determining and influencing the policies of each state. These new trends have given rise to the new 'emerging powers' paving the way for multipolarity in the current configuration of global politics. Among these emerging powers, some have acquired or are acquiring, wider global significance. These include most obviously China, India, Russia, Brazil, South Africa, Japan, European Union, and others. However, among all these powers, the most significant are China and India that may be important strategic partners, or may rival or even replace the United States as the dominant powers in the coming decades.

China's rise has been based upon its rapid economic progress since the introduction of market reforms in 1978 under Deng Xiaoping. Due to the annual growth rates of between eight to ten percent since the last three decades, China became the world's second largest economy after the United States in 2010.¹ China has also growing military capacity being second only to the United States in terms of arms expenditure.² Moreover, China's emerging global role is evident in the influence it exerts within the World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Security Council (UNSC), G-20 and on global issues such as climate change, nuclear proliferation (in case of Iran and North

Korea) as well as its growing influence in the resource rich areas of Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East.

The transformation of India into an emerging power has been based on economic growth rates only marginally less impressive than China's. India's increased growth rates stem from the introduction of economic reforms in the early 1990s more than a decade after China's market reforms. Growing by 7.46 percent annually, the Indian economy is projected to become the world's third largest economy after China and the U.S. by 2030.³ Moreover, India's vital position in South Asia, its strategic position between Western Asia and South East Asia, its defense capabilities including nuclear weapons and increasing blue water navy and, above all, its emergence as a rival economic power to China, gives it an influential place in global politics.

Currently, these two Asian giants account for nearly 40 percent of world's population, and it is projected by the *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* report that by 2025, India and China will be the first and second largest populous countries in the world respectively.⁴ It is also estimated that if the current trend persists, by 2020 China and India will jointly account for half of the world's gross domestic product (GDP).⁵ Their rapid and broad based growth is altering trade and geostrategic relations in the region and beyond. Being the important members of the G-20, their influence will manifest in the global security, global politics, and in global economic environment. Each state's role in the international arena will also be affected by the nature of the interactions that develop between them.

In spite of sharing a glorious civilizational past, security competition between these two Asian giants is inevitable as their economies and military power grow within the same geographical space.⁶ The broad spectrum of emerging issues which exist between China and India are border dispute, Pakistan factor, water issues,⁷ establishing nuclear deterrence and political and economic influence in Asia and other parts of the world. This explains the competitive part of their relationship. At the same time, their perceptions of being emerging and rising states and their national goals of economic development lay the ground for their cooperative approach towards each other. This explains their increasing cooperative behavior on many issues.

In both these cases as mentioned above, the United States plays an important role. The U.S factor in Sino-Indian relations assumes significance from two perspectives - first from the Sino-Indian perspective and second from the U.S. perspective itself. From the Sino-Indian perspective, though both the Asian giants aspire to promote multipolarity and resent the U.S. unilateralism and hegemony, both need the U.S. support for their economic development, technological transfer, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, access to the U.S. market and other inducements. Their national goals of achieving great power status would remain an unaccomplished task without the active support and cooperation of the United States. With these aims of securing the U.S. support for the accomplishment of their respective goals, when one Asian giant tries to forge close cooperation with the United States, it creates strategic apprehensions and the fear of hostile alignment in the minds of another Asian giant. The fear of hostile alignment is more visible in China than in India because Indo-U.S. issues are not as intense and deep as are witnessed between China and the U.S. as well as between India and China. Moreover, both India and the United States are apprehensive about the intentions and unpredictable behavior of China. India's coming close to the U.S. is considered in China as being motivated by the Indian desire to help the U.S.' containment policy vis-a-vis China. Thus due to this U.S. factor, the competitive elements in Sino-Indian relations gets further intensified.

Second, as the two biggest emerging powers, the rise of China and India has attracted closer attention from the United States, the dominant (although declining) power in international system. The U.S. is concerned not only with the spread of growth in China and India but also the development of relations between them. As the rise of China and India could eventually result in a realignment of international order by creating multiple poles of power and influence, the U.S. will face increased challenges to its military, economic, political, and cultural hegemony. In such a scenario, the U.S. will be constrained in policy tools it can use unilaterally and will need to incorporate in its policy process the greater influence that China and India will have with nations and within international institutions.⁸ More pertinently, China is the biggest challenger among them as it has the great potential to replace the U.S. as a dominant power in the coming decades if the pace of its development continues uninterruptedly.

Moreover, though the United States is not geographically the part of Asian continent, it is the only power with global reach as it has extensive political, economic, and security interests as well as military presence in every region of Asia - East Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, South and South East Asia, and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). It also enjoys security, economic and commercial ties and interests with most of the Asian countries and most of the Asian developments are influenced by its policies and actions. In such a complex situation, the rapid rise of China, if not managed successfully, will eventually alter the global balance of power and institutions in ways that are not in consonance with the U.S.' desired interests and values. Therefore, the U.S. is playing an important role in cultivating India as a strategic partner to realize its goal of remaining firmly embedded in Asia at a time when the continent is emerging as the world's new centre of gravity and where China is emerging as a formidable challenge to the U.S. interests.

It is within the contextual frameworks of these developments in the post-Cold War era, that this study seeks to analyze and examine diverse aspects related to the problem under investigation. This is to understand how Sino-Indian relations are affected by the changing dynamics of global politics and especially by the U.S. factor.

Objectives of the Study

This thesis aims to determine the extent to which the U.S. as a factor is an intervening variable in the multifaceted Sino-Indian relations particularly in the post-Cold War era. In addition to this main objective, the other objectives of the study would be:

1. To investigate the impact of the Super Power rivalry (the U.S. and the Soviet Union) on the Sino-Indian relations during the Cold War period. It aims to provide the historical framework to better understand the impact of current dynamics of external factors (the U.S.) on Sino-Indian relationships.
2. To investigate the U.S.' interests and policies towards China and India and in turn India's and China's policies and interests towards the U.S. in the post-Cold War era.

3. To investigate the motivations and strategic rationale behind the Indo-U.S. Strategic Partnership and China's perceptions towards it.
4. To examine and analyze the nature and scope of U.S.-China relationship and India's responses towards it.
5. To evaluate the prospects of the emergence of the strategic triangle between the U.S., China and India in the current multipolar world order.

Hypothesis

The study is designed to examine and analyze the - *U.S. as a Factor in Sino-India Relations in Post Cold War Era*. In order to obtain better perspectives on the problem under investigation, the study proceeds from a main hypothesis: "In the complex type of Sino-Indian relations, the U.S. has emerged as a strong and dominant intervening variable in the post-Cold War era. India and China view their relation with the United States as a critical ingredient of their strategic interests. Also the unprecedented rise of China and thereby the 'China threat' is one of the factors responsible for the Indo-U.S. Strategic Partnership".

Research Questions

The study attempts to probe the following questions:

1. How will the U.S. strategic relationship with India be influenced by the rise of China?
2. What are China's responses/perceptions to the growing Indo-U.S. strategic cooperation?
3. How does the U.S.-China cooperation or competition affect India's security interests and in both cases what are India's responses?
4. To what extent the three countries interact with each other in the triangular framework?
5. Is there any possibility of an alignment of the two countries against the third one or will the three countries forge a cooperative or win-win cooperation?

6. And lastly, will the U.S. as an intervening variable try to mediate in emerging rivalry between China and India or will it placate one Asian rival against another for its own interests?

Methodology

In order to explore answers to the critical questions as mentioned above, the methods applied in this study are historical, analytical, descriptive and comparative. Although, the study is confined to the post-Cold War era, the historical method has been used with a view to analyze the impact of Super Power rivalry (the U.S. and the Soviet Union) and their impact on Sino-Indian relations during the Cold War period to understand and appreciate the current dynamics of the U.S. factor in Sino-Indian relations. In addition to it, the content analysis method has also been applied frequently throughout the study to critically evaluate the particular events related to the problem under investigation.

Sources of Data

A wide array of information obtained both from the primary and secondary sources have been used in this study. In this regard, the governmental annual reports and press releases; documents related to the joint statements by the heads of the states; the speeches and the statements of the heads of the states and other policy-makers; monographs, reports, and issue briefs by the think tanks; books; articles from renowned journals; newspaper articles and editorials, etc. were collected, collated and used for arriving at conclusions in an objective way.

Theoretical Framework

Realism

In the dominion of International Relations (IR), the realist paradigm is dominated by two major groups - Classical Realists and Neo-Realists. There are considerable differences among the adherents of these two groups regarding why power and struggle for it are central features of nation-state behavior. However, in spite of these differences, all the realists share a handful of core beliefs/assumptions. For instance, all realists hold the view that states are principle actors in the world politics and no higher authority sits over

them (anarchy).⁹ Further, calculations about power dominate state thinking and there is an unending struggle for power among states. Though the states cooperate with each other but at the root they have conflicting interests and not harmony of interests. The distribution of power is the most important variable among all realists explaining state's behavior and the best way of managing conflict in the system is by balancing power by power. Hence the common dictum is, "if you want peace, you must be prepare for the war".¹⁰

In international relations various strands of realism such as offensive realism, defensive realism, balance of power, balance of threat, power transformation analysis, etc. have been frequently applied to study the relations between different states. However, for the sake of this study, only two strands of realist paradigm have been used viz., Security Dilemma and the Power Transition Theory. The security dilemma is a concept according to which when a state seeks to increase its own security, it has the unintended effect of decreasing the security of another state, which in turn makes a similar responses having similar effect leading to a cycle of competitive moves that in the worst case result in conflict.¹¹ Thus, a common search for security creates a situation in which these states feel less secure towards each other. For example, the special partnership which a state might forge with other power(s) or the weapons that a state might acquire for its own self-protection has the potential to threaten the security of other states.¹²

This kind of security dilemma is often witnessed among the two Asian giants - China and India due to the complexity of their strategic and security interests. Since the emergence of these two nations as independent members of the international community, both have been forging relations with other powers regional or otherwise to enhance their security vis-a-vis each other. For instance, after the Sino-Indian Border War in 1962, India came close to the United States and the Soviet Union to thwart any future Chinese aggression. Likewise, in the aftermath of Indo-Pak Wars in 1965 and in 1971 and the close cooperation between India and the Soviet Union, China formed an alliance with the U.S. and Pakistan to neutralize growing Indo-Soviet partnership. The trilateral nexus between China, the U.S. and Pakistan alarmed Indian security establishment which

compelled her to lean more and more towards the Soviet Union and which ultimately led to the Indo-Soviet Friendship and Peace Treaty in 1971. It becomes clear that both the sides were sensitive towards each other's forging of close cooperation with the third power.

More pertinently, in the post-Cold War period, both the giants are using their relationship with the U.S. to gain strategic advantage vis-à-vis each other. That is the main reason, when one state tries to forge close relations with the U.S., it tremendously increases the security apprehensions in the other country. It can be illustrated from the fact that the growing relations between the United States and China in the immediate years following the end of the Cold War increased the apprehensions among Indians about the prospects of a U.S.-China joint hegemony over the Sub-Continent. This development became more apparent when the Washington and Beijing issued a Joint Statement on South Asia in the wake of India's and Pakistan's nuclear tests in May 1998, calling India and Pakistan to halt their nuclear program and resume bilateral dialogue. This development was presumed by India as going against her interests. According to an Indian analyst, "in the Indian eyes, this Sino-U.S. Joint Statement on South Asia suggested that under the wing of the United States, China might play a wider role in South Asia".¹³

On the other side, warming of relations between India and the United States in the recent years have raised the apprehensions in China about India's joining the American containment plan against China. The Indo-U.S. defense cooperation particularly the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP), New Framework for U.S.-India Defense Relations, Indo-U.S. Civil Nuclear Cooperation, etc. is being perceived in Beijing as an important ingredient of the U.S. containment policy.

Thus the fear of hostile strategic alignments has gained ground in both the Asian states and laid the basis for what international relations scholars call the "Security dilemma". What one Asian giant sees as a necessary step in protecting and promoting its own interests be it upgrading its weapons, building infrastructure along the Sino-Indian border, gaining access to new markets, forging close relationships with other countries such as the U.S., Pakistan, Japan, Russia, etc. are perceived by the other as aggressive

moves to undermine its strategic position. The security dilemma thus, sets-off the two mutually suspicious nations on an ever escalating competition resulting in reducing security for both. It is in the context of these security related apprehensions towards each other that some realists predict in Asia a coming battle for supremacy between India and China¹⁴. However, in this equation, sometimes, the United States, the intervening variable also gets entangled into the security dilemma vis-a-vis China and India when the latter two along with Russia comes close against the United States on the issues where their strategic interests converge. Nevertheless, the U.S. dilemma/apprehensions are not as intense or deep as are witnessed between the two Asian giants due to the deep complexity in their relationship.

Another variant of realist paradigm which has been applied to the study is power structure transform analysis or simply power transition theory. This theory was set forth by Organski and Kugler for analyzing the ominous consequences of a rising power under the anarchic world system. This analysis can be applied to the Sino-Indian relations and their interactions with the United States in the context that China and India are the emerging and rising powers whereas the United States is an established power. According to this analysis, conflict is inevitable when a rising power dissatisfied with the status quo approaches parity with the dominant power in the system and is willing to use its force to reshape the system's rules and institutions in its own favor.¹⁵ In other words, when a rising power's overall strength expands, it will try to expand and advance its national interests in the region and beyond, which will cause those established powers that want to maintain status quo respond severely.

Within these perspectives, when the power transition theory is applied to the contemporary rise of China and India on the one hand and the established power, the U.S. on the other hand, many realist scholars predict a pessimist evolution of their interaction with each other especially between China and India and the U.S. and China. It is noticed that the U.S. is more concerned about the rise of China than India due to the two facts. First, there is no such security and strategic issues between India and the U.S. as is witnessed between China and the U.S. and instead India and the U.S. have number of complementary interests despite being emerging and established powers respectively.

Second, though both China and India are rising powers, there is power asymmetry between China and India and it is the former which poses a strategic threat to the U.S. and not the latter. Moreover, though both China and India are rising powers, India perceives threat from its rising competitor (China) rather than from an established power (the U.S.) due to historical animosity and current issues related to the security between China and India.

In accordance with the realist paradigm, China will not like to play "second fiddle" to U.S. in Asia and will overtime pursue a more assertive role and strive for great power status.¹⁶ Similarly, India as a rising power would not like to play a second fiddle to China as the two Asian giants aspires great power status at the same time, same place and in the same institutions.

According to realists (power transition theorists), the history of international relations also strongly support their argument. For example, in the period between two World Wars, Germany turned to be the threat to the Atlantic region as an emerging power. It was Germany's aspiration to expand its power that caused the two World Wars. Similarly, Japan was a rising power before the Second World War and its expansion in the Pacific region in the 1930s and 1940s eventually led to the Pacific War.¹⁷

Besides the scholars whose arguments are based upon historical analogies, some others who argue that China will balance against the U.S. in East Asia typically point to the rapid expansion of China's military capabilities. They argue that the goal of this military modernization is to counter the United States' pre-eminence in the region.¹⁸ For instance, in an Annual Report to Congress, the Pentagon stated, "China's military modernization was driven primarily by potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait, and also by its expanding interests and influence abroad".¹⁹ Likewise, Mearshiemer has pointed out, "a wealthy China would not be a status-quo power but an aggressive state determined to achieve regional hegemony".²⁰ Again he asserts, if China continues its impressive economic growth over the next few decades, the U.S. and China are likely to engage in an intensive security competition with considerable potential for conflict.²¹

On the other side, China does not want India to emerge as a peer competitor that will challenge its status as the Asia-Pacific's sole "Middle Kingdom" as an old Chinese saying goes, "one mountain cannot accommodate two tigers".²² In this context, China is following a balance of power approach to restrict India's influence by establishing closer ties with countries in South Asia - Indian Ocean Region (IOR) like Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, etc. Moreover, China has covertly or overtly assisted Pakistan's (India's arch rival) nuclear and missile capabilities. The fundamental core of these ties with South Asian states and especially with Pakistan is based on the logic of balance-of-power vis-a-vis India.²³

Thus from the above discussion, it is observed that the realist paradigm provides a conflictual interactions between the three states especially between the two dyads i.e., China and India and the U.S. and China. It is the common wariness about the rise of China and thereby "China threat" that sometimes results in close cooperation between the U.S. and India vis-a-vis China. It is also observed from the realist perspectives that what China seeks from the United States, India seeks the same from China. For instance, the U.S. is the principle strategic adversary for China; for India, it is China. India's deterrence capabilities are China-centric whereas China's are U.S. centric. Just as China accuses the U.S. of pursuing the policy of containment, Indians accuse China of using every opportunity to contain India. Thus, China's complaints about the U.S. are a mirror image of India's complaints and grievances about China. In other words, China's behavior toward India is not much different from the U.S. behavior for China for the simple reason that China is a status-quoist power with respect to India while the U.S. is a status-quoist power concerning China.

Liberalism

The principle challenge to realism came from a broad family of liberal thought. Liberals postulate that humans possess reason and when this reason is applied to the interaction between different nation-states, the end result would be great cooperation. Here the two strands of liberalism i.e., interdependence liberalism and the institutional liberalism are more relevant to contrast the conflictual interactions between China, India and the U.S. on the world stage as hypothesized by realists.

Interdependence liberalism holds the view that people and governments from diverse nations are intertwined and interconnected with each other and are affected by each other's actions. The higher level of transnational relations particularly the commercial and trade interactions between different states means higher level of interdependence.²⁴ In this way, commercial or economic interdependence especially free trade reduces the prospects of conflict/war by increasing the costs to the parties.²⁵ Even some neo-realists such as Kenneth Waltz recognize the fact that states are not autonomous actors. Some others argue that states may be conceived as coalition partners whose objectives and interests result from bargaining process among several groups of nations. It is this phenomenon that Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane called "Complex Interdependence".²⁶ Accordingly, the proponents of interdependence liberalism would assert that these new economic ties would ultimately lead to the peaceful relations among nations. In the words of Rosecrance, "the cost-benefit ratio of fighting a war has been tilted away from war, which is very costly and toward trade which is increasingly beneficial".²⁷ Thus, interdependence/economic liberalism hold the view that economic interactions/interdependence would discourage states from using force against each other because being interdependent upon each other in certain ways, warfare would threaten each side's prosperity.²⁸

On the other side, institutional liberalism is related to the beneficial effects of international institutions. Institutional liberals, like interdependent liberals, do not agree with the realist view that international institutions are mere "scrapes of paper" or that they are at the complete mercy of powerful states.²⁹ Instead these institutions are of independent importance, and thereby, can promote cooperation between states. For them, international institutions/organizations such as International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Energy Agency (IEA), World Trade Organization (WTO), and other global organizations and institutions could help overcome selfish state behavior mainly by encouraging states to skip immediate gains for greater benefits of long term cooperation.³⁰ Moreover, these institutions are governed by particular set of rules in different areas like trade, energy, finance, etc. and these set of rules are often called 'regimes'. For example, the trade regime is shaped primarily by the WTO rules.³¹ Thus,

institutional liberalism focuses on the contribution of international institutions in fostering collective security, managing conflict, and promoting cooperation.

When the Sino-Indian relations and their interactions with the United States are analyzed and examined in the liberal perspectives, especially those centered on the consequence of interdependence and institutional liberalism, it becomes clear that there is no difficulty in predicting the peaceful evolution of the relationship between them. Realizing that the three states have made tremendous progress in the field of trade with each other, the proponents of liberal interdependence theory asserts that they would prefer to stay at peace rather than resort to conflict so as to guarantee their continued strong economic links.

In this context, China and India as rising powers seem to be orienting themselves much more than the established power (the United States) towards cooperation with each other. This can be discerned from the fact that unlike Germany and Japan between the two World Wars, China and India as rising powers prefer to merge into the international cooperative regimes like WTO, IMF, World Bank, etc. For instance, Mao Zedong, after assuming the charge of his office as a Chairman announced that his government is willing to observe the principle of equality, mutual benefit, and mutual respect of territorial integrity and sovereignty.³² The realists, however, counter this argument by citing that during the Mao's era itself, China's behavior in international relations often deviated from the above stated principles. For example, it fought a full-fledged war with India in 1962 and several other border skirmishes occurred on the Sino-Indian border during this period. With the United States, China had several military confrontations particularly during the Korean and Vietnam wars.

However, it must be pointed out here that during those days the world was divided into two hostile blocs and the international trade and financial institutions such as World Bank, WTO, IMF, etc. had not acquired much acceptability and respectability in the international relations. It is noticeable that such a contradiction has largely receded since the late 1970s when Deng Xiaoping initiated reforms in Chinese economy. With the help of such a new ideology that moved away from orthodox Marxism, China accustomed its approach towards the world economic system from independence to

interdependence and collaboration. The reform era in China has been a period marked by the dissolving of the command system and the increasing growth of market economy. A milestone in this direction was China's entry into the WTO in 2001. By implementing the WTO principles of non-discrimination, transparency, and fair-play in China's economic system, the spirit of rule of law has been established. Thus committed to solving trade and other disputes within WTO framework, China has avoided direct confrontation either with India or with the United States. India on the other side, being a largest democratic country was already oriented towards liberal principles. However, since the economic reforms initiated in the early 1990s, it has become more committed to the international norms and trade rules. India, being one of the largest and fast growing economies, has substantial influence in the world financial institutions. Like China, India also wants to benefit from the current trend of globalization and economic liberalization. Furthermore, the most important development has been that the U.S. as an established power has viewed these developments positively and even facilitated the rise of India and China and their assimilation into these global institutions. For example, it was due to the intensive diplomatic maneuvering of the U.S. that China was admitted into the WTO in 2001. global institutions.

In addition to these institutional arrangements, the economies of three countries are interconnected with each other and all the three states benefit from such economic links. While both China and India need technology transfer, FDI, access to U.S. markets and other economic incentives from the United States; the latter needs the huge markets of these two Asian giants and cooperation on addressing various problems related to global economic issues such as protecting intellectual property rights (IPRs), maintaining global financial stability, etc.

Bilaterally too, the three dyads have also witnessed a significant economic upward trend since the past two decades. For example, China is now the largest U.S. trading partner (after Canada), third largest U.S. export market (after Canada and Mexico), and largest source of U.S. imports.³³ In 2014, the bilateral merchandise trade between the U.S. and China was US\$ 590 billion. Likewise, Indo-U.S economic relations are also growing though it is very low as compared to U.S.-China trade. Overall trade

between the U.S. and India rose fivefold from US\$ 12 billion in 2001 to US\$ 62 billion in 2014 which is expected to touch US\$ 100 billion mark by 2018.³⁴ Moreover, from April 2000 to September 2014, total FDI inflows from the U.S. to India stood at US\$ 13.12 billion, making U.S. the sixth largest contributor of FDI to India. On the other side, the Sino-Indian dyad has also witnessed a significant rise in bilateral trade since the end of the Cold War. For instance, from the very modest beginning of US\$ 2 billion in 2000-2001, the Sino-Indian bilateral trade raised US\$ 70 billion in 2014.³⁵ Moreover, China has become India's largest trading partner and India is China's seventh largest export destination.

Thus, neo-liberals, particularly interdependence liberals assert that increasing economic contacts and integration between the two Asian giants and the U.S. would create interests in stable and cooperative political relations by increasing the opportunity cost of conflict, and ultimately they assume that political stability will follow economic interests.³⁶ Similarly, institutional liberals maintain that India's and China's assimilation and participation in international institutions along with the United States have moderated their behavior towards each other. Liberals in general held that any deviation from these institutional and interdependence framework from the side of any state would not only have negative impact on their economies but would be disastrous for all the three states especially to China and India who are emerging powers and need peaceful environment for their sustained economic rise. The U.S. would also like to promote Sino-Indian cooperative relations because in case of Sino-Indian conflict, the U.S. economic interests which are immensely entrenched in these two countries would also suffer huge losses.

Constructivism

In the above two sections, the current trends and prospects of interactions between China, India and the United States were examined and analyzed from the realist and liberal perspectives. However, it is observed that these two perspectives/approaches being dominated by the materialist view pay little attention to the ideational side of the debate in shaping the policy-making process of the three countries under investigation. This limitation is rectified by applying the constructivist approach to better understand and appreciate how ideational factors (ideas, identity, assumptions, perceptions, etc.)

influence the U.S. decision-makers in dealing with China and India or what are India's and China's national identity and interest within the framework of current international system? Or how do India and China perceive each other's relationship with the United States?

Constructivism focuses on the social construction of reality. Human relations, including international relations consist of thoughts and ideas and not essentially of material conditions or forces. According to material or rational view held by the realists and liberals, power and national interest, are the driving forces of international politics. In this view, ideas matter little; they can be used to rationalize actions dictated by national interests.³⁷ On the contrary, according to constructivists, ideas always matter. For instance, the international security and defense consists of territories, populations, weapons, and other physical assets, but it is ideas and understanding according to which those assets are conceived, organized and used. Thus, though the physical elements are there, it is only secondary to the intellectual element which organizes and guides it.

According to Alexander Wendt, it is possible for states that through repeated interactions or positive inter-subjective shared knowledge, they can form positive identities and interests. At the same time, as repeated interactions of positive nature or positive inter-subjective shared knowledge can lead to collective identities and interests, repeated negative images breeds hostility, mistrust and possible conflict.³⁸ Applied to Sino-Indian relations and their interactions with the U.S., constructivists maintain that cooperation, hostility, alignments, etc. will be determined to a great extent by the repeated interactions (positive or negative) and inter-subjective shared knowledge between these states. For instance, many Chinese are proud of China's civilization and are also shamed by the 'Century of humiliation'. The concept of century of humiliation which refers to a period that Chinese suffered at the Western imperialists from 1840s has significant impact on the nature of Chinese national identity. China's rise since 1990s provides it an opportunity to regain its feeling of national pride and, at the same time, erase its humiliation.³⁹ Much like China, modern India has inherited, and recognizes, a long historical and cultural tradition of Indic civilization in South Asia. Moreover, once

under the colonial subjugation, the rising India also aspires to regain its past glory of a great power status.

In the constructivist framework, as both the Asian giants aspire to do the same thing at the same time and on the same continental mass, there might occur conflict between these two states if their inter-subjective shared knowledge is negative. At the same time, it might also be peaceful if they perceive each other's rise as non-threatening. So far as the United States is concerned, it perceives the rise of China as threatening due to the repeated negative interactions with the former. However, in case of India, Washington perceives its rise not only as non-threatening but also beneficial to the world community. The U.S.' positive perceptions about India emanate from the shared values between these two states. These shared values include the respect for democracy, individual liberty, freedom of expression and religion, multicultural society, rule of law, etc. These values are inherent in their societies as well as in their political practices which have been shared constantly between the two societies during the course of history.⁴⁰ It is on the basis of these shared values that the U.S. President Barack Obama once remarked, "there is no doubt that there are aspects of India that make U.S. closer to India. Specifically, it is a democracy and it reflects the values and aspirations of our country in a way that China could not. And so that I think there is an affinity there that I feel personally and I think the American people feel as well".⁴¹ On the other hand, China is viewed as a totalitarian state with limited or no liberty and freedom of thought, speech or otherwise. It is also perceived as a revisionist state whose ultimate aim is to displace the United States as a dominant power.

So far as India is concerned, its inter-subjective shared knowledge with China have often been characterized by mutual suspicion, fear and trust deficit. India perceives that once China becomes an equal contender to the United States, it will hegemonize the entire Asian region, leaving India only to play a second fiddle. Thus according to constructivists, the imagination of China threat due to the repeated negative interactions between China and India on the one hand and the U.S and China on the other hand, has led the U.S. and India to forge strategic partnership vis-a-vis China.

On the other hand, China perceives that the formation of Indo-U.S. alliance in order to contain China also depends on the Chinese attitude towards both India and the U.S. Therefore, to change and reduce the perceptions of "China threat" in the U.S. and India, China has been projecting its rise as "peaceful development", a concept in China that its rise is non-threatening and instead would be beneficial to the international community. China has also been attempting to express its amity to the United States through being responsible stake holder in addressing the global issues in conjunction with the United States' aspirations. For example, China has exerted pressure on North Korea as desired by the U.S. and has brought it (North Korea) to the negotiating table by organizing the 'Six Party Talks'.⁴²

With regard to India, China has sought to change the existing identity of Sino-Indian relations from competitor to partner. To realize that end, China has taken a series of bilateral confidence building measures (CBMs) with India. For instance, to enhance the trust among Indians about the good intentions of China, it has taken neutral position on Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan. Similarly, for resolving the border issue, it has signed various border agreements with India, the latest being the Border Defense Cooperation Agreement (BDCA) which was signed in 2013. Moreover, China is also trying to play the anti-West, "Asian Solidarity", or the "Third World" card to wean India away from the U.S.⁴³ The aim of all these Chinese initiative has been to convince India that China aims/intends to cultivate good neighborly relations with India so that it (India) does not come close to the U.S. strategically or militarily. Moreover, in the constructivist perspectives, in addition to interactions between states, the rise of common "others" - issues or threats that cannot be faced by one state alone reduces state's ability to act unilaterally and encourage cooperation.⁴⁴ In the case of China, India and the U.S. interactions, the common threats such as climate change, international terrorism and financial instability have created a greater degree of collective identity due to the positive inter-subjective shared knowledge which has resulted in greater cooperation between these three states to deal with these global/common problems collectively.

Thus in the constructivist framework it is the ideational elements such as concepts, identity, intentions, knowledge, perceptions, rules, symbols, etc. that will

determine and shape the dynamics of the U.S. factor in Sino-Indian relation. No matter, the material factors such as China's economic rise, military modernization, Indo-U.S. defense cooperation and the U.S.-China cooperation or competition will have significant impact on the nature of Sino-Indian interactions but these factors itself will be dogged by the ideational factors. For example, China's rise will be perceived as threatening by India and the U.S. only if they have repeated negative interactions with China. Similarly, China feels apprehensive about the close relationship between India and the U.S. because it perceives it as an initiation of containment policy. On the contrary, the positive inter-subjective shared knowledge on economic matters have created cooperation between the three states

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is observed that realism, liberalism and constructivism offer valuable theoretical perspectives on the impact of external factors (the U.S.) on Sino-Indian relations. There is no denying the fact that one singular approach or theoretical perspective cannot be applied to understand the relation between India and China with emphasis on the U.S. as a factor. In fact, all three major theoretical perspectives provide a better understanding and appreciation of the dynamics of the U.S. factor in Sino-Indian relation. There are takers and proponents of all three approaches to the study of triangular relations between an established Super Power (the U.S.) and two emerging major powers (China and India). However, relying heavily upon one single approach to understand the complexities of relations between these three important actors of international politics will be misleading. Therefore, all three theoretical perspectives (liberal, realist and constructivist) provide a perspicacious understanding of the relations between China and India with special focus on the U.S. factor in the bilateral relationship of two Asian giants.

Notes

¹ Andrew Heywood, *Globalization of World Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2011, pp.229-230.

² With the current strength of 2.5 million soldiers, China spent US\$ 129.94 billion on defense in 2014 as compared to US \$571 billion by the United States in the same year. Though there is a huge gap between China and the U.S. in terms of military expenditure, China has become the second largest country in terms of military expenditure. (Niall McCarthy, "The Biggest Military Budget as a Percentage (Infographic)", *Forbes Business*, 25 June 2015, Available at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2015/06/25/the-biggest-military-budgets-as-a-percentage-of-gdp-infographic-2/#3bfe99954064> (Accessed on 16 July, 2015).

³ Alyssa Ayres, "Economic Growth and India's Global Rise", *Forbes Asia*, 17 August, 2015, Available at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/alyssaayres/2015/08/17/economic-growth-and-indias-global-rise/#118181587af3> (Accessed on 25 August, 2015).

⁴ Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World, National Intelligence Council (NIC), Washington D.C., November, 2008, pp.25-26, Available at http://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Reports%20and%20Pubs/2025_Global_Trends_Final_Report.pdf (Accessed on 13 December, 2014).

⁵ Andrew Heywood, op.cit., pp.229-230.

⁶ Ananya Chatterjee, "India-China-United States: The Post Cold War Evolution of Strategic Triangle", *Political Perspectives*, Vol.5, No.3, 2011, pp.74-95.

⁷ Issues related to the sharing of water are becoming major area of concern between China and India. Many experts are arguing that disputes relating to water will be major source of conflict between the two countries in future. China's plan of constructing big dams and diverting the water of rivers to its own advantage has created discontent in India. As there are four rivers vis., (Tackok Khabab or Brahmaputra; Ma Cha Khabab or Ganga; Langchen Khabab or Sutlej; Senge Khabab or Indus) that flow from China and enter into India, Beijing's strategic advantage over these rivers makes it possible for her to counter-balance India on many other issues.

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Chapter-II

The Super Power Rivalry and the Sino-Indian Relations:

A Historical Background

Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine and analyze the impacts of external powers particularly the United States and the former Soviet Union on Sino-Indian relationship during the Cold War era. Although, Sino-Indian relationship is essentially bilateral in nature, it has been influenced and shaped by the external factors as well. It cannot be denied that during the Cold War, the foreign policies of almost all countries of the world were influenced by the two antagonistic ideological blocs led by the Soviet Union and the United States. In fact, the bipolar world during the Cold War was bound to be shaped and guided by the actions, reactions or interaction between the two Super Powers. Therefore, the Sino-Indian relations during this period cannot be fully appreciated and understood without taking into account the interests and approaches of the two Super Powers towards India and China. The dynamics of Super Power interactions with these two Asian giants assumes significance in any comprehensive study of Sino-Indian relationship. China's relations with Super Powers greatly influenced its relations with her Asian neighbors particularly India. For example, the twenty years of hostile Sino-American relationship (1950-1970) and then rapprochement (1971-1989) had a great impact on Sino-Indian relationship. Similarly, the Indo-U.S. hostility during most of the Cold War years, the Indo-Soviet friendship, and the Sino-Soviet rivalry have had a great impact on Sino-Indian interactions.

Asia in general and South Asia in particular has been a central area of the Great Power struggle for influence due to its geostrategic significance and vast population. In the post World War-II period, the Cold War rivalry between the two Super Powers - the U.S. and the Soviet Union came to affect this vital region also. In the course of time, the furious competition between the two powers for gaining a foothold in the South Asian region came to engulf almost every South Asian state within its ambit and affected their foreign policy orientations and strategic thinking to an unprecedented level. Thus within

this context, it is safe to argue that the primary significance of the states of Asia lies in their role in the competition between the U.S. and the Soviet Union for global and regional influence.

In retrospect, the U.S. after gaining its independence from Britain sought to limit its involvement in international affairs and avoided competition with foreign powers. The architects of the new republic sought to distance the U.S from the power rivalries in Europe and the non-involvement in political intrigues of the time. In his farewell address in 1796, President George Washington set-out guidelines for the U.S. foreign policy that found widespread approval: "The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is extending our commercial relations but to have with them as little political connections as possible. It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world".¹

Thus the policy of isolationism or non entanglement was the guiding principle of the U.S. foreign policy in the initial period of its birth as a republic. However, in the middle of the twentieth century, the U.S. has finally decided to set aside its age old policy of isolationism and thereafter, began to play an active and leading role in the world at large. This change of foreign policy orientation from isolationism to active participation can be observed during the World War-II when the U.S. fully participated on the side of allied powers. In the post World War-II period, the U.S. perceived the rise of the Soviet Communism as big a threat and challenge to the peace and prosperity of the free world. Therefore, in order to thwart the Communist threat, the U.S. assumed the leadership of the 'free world' and initiated a global strategy of anti-Communism. This U.S. anti-Communism strategy was initiated in 1947 with the 'Truman Doctrine' of containment.² After the introduction of containment policy, the U.S. first turned its attention to Europe through Marshall Plan (1947) and later American strategists abruptly set out to extend the policy of containment to Asia.

On the other side, the Soviet Union was generally perceived as the dominant external power in Asia. In late 1950s, it got itself involved in Asian affairs against what it called the anti-Capitalist approach and reactionary intrigues directed against the suppressed people of the continent. In the initial years, the foremost aim of the Soviet

Union was to ensure that this region would not be used by any power against any country. However, this policy of the Soviet Union changed radically when the U.S. introduced its doctrine of containment as pursued through the defense pacts in late 1950s. More pertinently, Moscow perceived the U.S. and China as potential threats to the Soviet interests in Asia. The Soviet Union thought that the competition for influence in the area was zero-sum game and in order to reduce the U.S.' and Chinese influence, it has to increase its own influence.³

Thus in the late 1950s, the two Super Powers had become deeply involved in the Asian region to restrict the each other's expansion and influence. Subsequently, their intense involvement and rivalry in Asia compelled the regional states to choose sides and align either with one Super Power or the other for their own peculiar needs and national interests. In this way, the bilateral relations of the regional states such as of Indo-Pak relations, Sino-Pak relations and Sino-Indian relations were greatly influenced by the U.S.-Soviet interactions in the region. At the same time, the alignment or inclination of one regional state with one Super Power was the cause of friction with other Super Power which made the regional bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral relationships more complex and suspicious. However, keeping in view the main focus of this study, only the bilateral relationship between China and India would be examined in the following pages in the light of Super Power rivalry and dynamics.

Sino-Indian Relations and Super Power Rivalry

After the conclusion of World War II, the Republic of India and the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) emerged as two nations in 1947 and 1949 respectively. These two nation-states were born into international system through diametrically opposite means. While India achieved her independence through a non-violent revolution, China resorted to civil war to become the first Communist state in Asia. It was natural that both the states adopted the different models for the reconstruction of their nation-states in the post independent era. While India became the leading democratic country with non-alignment as a guiding principle of her foreign policy; China adopted a purely Communist pattern of society with ideological orientation towards Soviet Union.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the architect of India's foreign policy and the leading champion of the non-alignment movement, believed that military pacts do not bring peace to the countries involved. These pacts increase rather than decrease international tension. He was against interference in the internal affairs of any country by another country. In March, 1950 while speaking in Parliament he stated that India is pursuing a policy absolute non-interference.⁴ Sardar K.M. Panikkar beautifully summarizes a historical account as to why India under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru adopted the policy of non-alignment and denied itself the benefits of alliance with more powerful states when most of the states aligned either with one Super Power or the other to promote their national interests. He says:

To understand this, one has to go back into Indian history. It was through subordinate alliances for the purpose of defending their territories that the rulers of India lost their independence in the 18th and 19th centuries. By calling a strong power to help you in defending your independence, you subordinate your policies to the advice of protecting power and thereby limit your independence. With so recent an experience to warn her, it is not surprising that India refused to allow herself to be allied in mutual security pacts.⁵

On the other hand, China seeing the main contradiction as between Socialism and Capitalism, joined the Socialist Camp led by the Soviet Union. The Sino-Soviet good relations can, however, be traced back to 1919 when the Soviet Russia published its famous Karakhan Declaration, which repudiated all the unequal treaties that Tsarist Russia had forced upon China in the 19th century and offered new treaty on the negotiations of China's equality and independence. Influenced by this good gesture and by the earlier Bolshevik seizure of power in October Revolution, only two years later in 1921, Chinese Marxists formed the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and ushered in a new era of complex relations between the Chinese Communists and their Russian counterparts.⁶ After the 1949 Communist victory in China, an independent CCP under Mao emerged and the Soviet Union was forced to recognize it and both the Communist giants signed 1950 Mutual Assistance Treaty. After signing this Treaty, the Soviet Union increased its technical and economic assistance to the PRC. Mao also recognized the leadership of Stalin in the Communist bloc and his position in the Marxist-Leninist anti-Capitalist struggle. Thereafter, the Sino-Soviet relations witnessed the continuous upward

trajectory and reached its climax in 1953 when Soviet aid and assistance reached its high point under Malenkov and Bulganin.⁷

Thus it is observed that in the immediate years followed by Communist victory in China, Beijing's foreign policy was guided by the ideological and doctrinaire considerations. The guiding principle of her foreign policy was China's alliance with Moscow, subscribing to the idea of the 'world of two camps'.⁸ Under the Soviet influence and desperately needing Soviet assistance for security and for economic development, Mao apparently followed Soviet policy, treating the newly independent Asian countries like India as "stooges of Anglo-American imperialism".⁹ To quote the words of Mao, "neutrality is a camouflage and the third world does not exist." Even after India got independence from the British, China still treated it as semi-colony which was aligned with the Anglo-American camp. Thus, within the influence of these ideological considerations and close affinity with the Soviet Union, China initiated the policy of endorsing the Communist movements through-out the world including India which caused the mutual suspicion and bitterness between India and China.¹⁰

However, after establishing diplomatic ties, there began some convergence of interests and understanding on major international issues, and both China and India cooperated with each other on various diplomatic fronts. For example, India fully backed the Chinese claim of restoration of permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). From 1950 to 1958, the Indian delegation to the UN General Assembly appealed to the UN at least 30 times, sponsored resolutions year after year advocating that PRC should represent China at the UN. Moreover, during the Korean War (1950-1953), India did not support the draft resolution which labeled China as an aggressor and also abstained from voting for the draft resolution for putting an embargo on China.¹¹ It was also due to India's efforts and initiatives that China was introduced to the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung (1955), which was organized by India along with other Colombo Powers.¹²

In response to these positive gestures from the side of India, China began to respect India's policy of not aligning with any bloc and for expanding its own policy of peace, neutrality and non-alignment, in spite of the fact that Mao was still suspicious of

India's policy of remaining neutral. China also named India as chairman of the Repatriation Committee for Prisoners of War (PoW) after Korean War.¹³ This mutual understanding on various diplomatic fronts between China and India led both the states to sign the *Panchsheel* Agreement¹⁴ in 1954 which later revolutionized the international affairs. This agreement was particularly the endorsement of Nehru's optimism that the newly independent nations could nullify the perception of a bipolar world, and that the regional powers of Asia can contradict the traditional balance-of-power politics.¹⁵ Thus all these developments had positive impact on Sino-Indian relations in the early 1950s.

During that period, India's policy of non-alignment was detested by both the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The core principle of the non-alignment was to oppose the division of world into two hostile power blocs and instead believed in active involvement in international affairs for promoting international peace and cooperation. But in spite of these high ideals propounded by non-alignment, it was looked down upon by both the Super Powers. For example, the Soviet Union under Stalin was suspicious of the genuineness of India's independence and non-alignment and regarded it as subservient to Western imperialism.¹⁶ On the other side, the U.S. also criticized the nonaligned policy of India and its neutrality by tooth and nail. Foster Dulles, the then U.S. Secretary of State dubbed it, "immoral policy" saying that those "who are not with us are against us".¹⁷ Thus due to the India's non-aligned policy and its unwillingness to be part of the U.S. led containment policy against the Soviet Union, the U.S. turned towards Pakistan (India's arch rival) and began to cultivate an alliance with it in order to contain the Soviet expansion in the South Asian region. Pakistan was viewed by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff as the only state with strategic value in the region, and necessary balancer and "more reliable" partner that "goes along with us on all but trusteeship and racial questions".¹⁸ The Eisenhower administration while expanding the Truman administration's policies, first concentrated on Turkey and Iran, and then gradually turned towards Pakistan (in spite of Indian objections) to create the so-called "Northern tier" scheme.¹⁹ In the U.S. strategic calculations, Pakistan's assets such as its geographical closeness to the Communist states such as China and the Soviet Union, easy access to the oil rich Persian Gulf, religious affinity and identity with the Middle Eastern countries and particularly its potential and willingness to act as a regional balancer to India were in fact

alluring.²⁰ Pakistan responded favorably to these U.S. overtures and in this way began to incline towards Washington. Thus Pakistan became the member of Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1954 and also became the part to the Mutual Defense Pact of 1954. It also became a member of South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO). Later on Pakistan became the full member of Western military alliance system with the conclusion of Mutual Security Agreement of 1959. By mid-1960s, Pakistan emerged as America's "most allied ally".²¹ It must be reiterated here that Pakistan's purpose in joining these military pact led by the Western camp was not to contain Communism but to strengthen its defense and bargaining position vis-a-vis India.

These military pacts between the U.S and Pakistan were perceived by India as the beginning of the "building up" of allied Pakistan and the "building down" of non-aligned India.²² It is widely argued that nothing exasperated India to such an extent since its independence as the inclusion of its arch enemy Pakistan into the U.S. led Western security system.²³ Therefore, in order to reduce the impact of U.S.-Pak alliance on India's security, India was also in need of equations and cooperative relations with other countries which would meet her political and economic interests and her security concerns. Meanwhile, the creation of anti-Soviet alliance system such as CENTO and SEATO alarmed the Soviet Union which led her to cultivate its own strategic interests in the South and Southeast Asia. It was here that the convergence of interests began to emerge between the Soviet Union and India. India seized this opportunity and Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union in mid-1950s and Khrushchev and Bulganin's joint state visit to India in 1955, laid the foundations of Indo-Soviet friendly equations.²⁴ The Indo-Soviet military assistance relationship began shortly thereafter. However, it must be reiterated here that India was not transforming itself into a Communist country. The Soviet Union was also agreeable to a relationship based on the concepts of peaceful co-existence and non-alignment.

Thus, India's implementing of the policy of non-alignment and maintaining friendly relations with the Soviet Union, and the contrasting U.S. policy of forming alliances (particularly with Pakistan) in order to deter the Soviet Union, made it difficult for the U.S. and India to work together. According to Strobe Talbott, the Indo-U.S.

relationship was incompatible obsessions - India with Pakistan and Americans with Soviet Union". Both were guilty of being on best terms with each other's principal enemy".²⁵

So far as China was concerned, the U.S. perceived it as its principal rival in Asia - more so than the Soviet Union, because initially it was China not the Soviet Union that argued for a stronger anti-U.S. line. The U.S. perception about China threat became apparent when China supported Viet Minh in their struggle against French in early 1950s, attacked offshore islands controlled by Taiwan in 1954-55 and intervened in the Korean War in late 1950s. To counter all these hostile moves by China, the U.S. created a network of alliances and bases in the Western Pacific - with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand that were aimed at containing the rise of Chinese power.²⁶ China on the other hand considered the United States as the most powerful Capitalist nation in the world and thereby its "Number One Enemy" and argued persistently that the U.S. imperialism was major threat to the world peace. The Chinese pointed to the ring of U.S. military positions on China's periphery - from Japan and Korea in the Northeast, through Taiwan and Philippines to Vietnam and Thailand in the South - as proof of aggressive imperialism of the U.S.²⁷ So intense was this ideological conflict between these two countries that any reduction of tensions seemed impossible.

Thus from the preceding analysis, it becomes clear that the U.S. did not have good relations either with China or with India due to various reasons and clash of interests. While towards India, the U.S. hostility was due to India's non-aligned policy and its orientation towards Soviet Union; India was hostile towards the U.S. due to its military alliance with Pakistan. Similarly, Sino-U.S. relations were hostile due to China's Communist ideology and its ideological inclination towards Soviet Union. In the context of these factors, there was a brief period of India-China solidarity in the mid-1950s to exclude the Super Powers from the region. Bilaterally too, these years also saw the friendly and cooperative ties between the two Asian giants which was embodied in the slogan "*Hindi-Chini bhai bhai*" (Indians and Chinese are brothers). However, this cordial relationship between China and India did not last long and by late 1950s began to deteriorate due multiple factors, both bilateral and external.

Sino-Indian Border War 1962 and the Aftermath

The war between China and India over border issue in 1962 was a major event which made the Super Power involvement in the Sino-Indian relations more intense and deep. It also led to dramatic alterations in the foreign policies of both the Asian giants. But before proceeding further to examine external dynamics, it becomes imperative here to provide a brief account of those bilateral events which stimulated China and India to confront each other openly. It was on 23 January, 1959 that the Chinese Premier Chou Enlai, in a letter to India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, for the first time questioned the established boundary between China and India. Further, it was on September, 1959 that the government of China for the first time, laid formal claim to 50,000 square miles of Indian territory in the Ladakh and in Northeast Frontier Agencies (NFA).²⁸ The boundary between China and India has been divided into three sectors - the western sector, the central sector and the eastern sector. From mid and late 1950s, small clashes began in all these directions, first in the central sector, then in the western sector, and finally in eastern sector along the McMahon Line.²⁹ China adopted an attitude that its boundary with India had never been formally delineated. Therefore, it called for consultation and conciliation on the basis of traditional customary lines. India, however, argued that the boundary was well defined on both natural historical grounds in the west and juridical grounds in the east and thus refused further negotiations for the border settlement.

In order to resolve the dead lock over border issue, the Chinese Prime Minister paid a visit to India on April, 1960 where he held a series of discussions with Nehru and other leaders. Though it was serious attempt to settle the border issue but the two parties could not reach an agreement on the boundary dispute. Thus the officials failed to reach consensus on any of the fundamental issues on agenda. It failed because, "neither side was willing to surrender its territorial claims or make reasonable concessions for to do so would be against the national security interests of each other."³⁰ When it became apparent that the border issue could not be resolved through discussion and consultation, tensions began to increase on the Sino-Indian border as both the sides initiated the military buildup all along the Sino-Indian border. Finally, the Sino-Indian border war started on 20 October, 1962 when units of People's Liberation Army (PLA) attacked a number of

Indian position in the eastern sector at Khinzemane, Dhola, and Tsangdhar. Other units struck simultaneously at Indian positions in western sector in the Pongong Lake area at Daulat Beg Oldi, Chusul, and Demchok.³¹ The war lasted for about a month and on 21 November 1962, China declared a unilateral ceasefire and started to withdraw its troops from the eastern sector. In the western sector, however, they come to occupy some 14,500 square miles of Indian territory.

The border dispute between India and China if seen in isolation may be essentially interpreted as a territorial issue (as discussed above) between two the states. However, if examined in the backdrop of changing international political situation in the late 1950s, it becomes difficult to delink it from these changes. It can be observed that preceding the Sino-Indian border conflict, the international political situation was unfolding new changes and dynamics which affected the Sino-Indian relationship in a comprehensive manner. To begin with, the U.S.- Soviet hostility was giving way to conflict-cum-cooperation between the two. Though both the sides considered each other as principal adversaries, neither side was willing an open confrontation. Thus the process of *detente* between the two Cold War rivals was initiated. Moreover, India's non-aligned policy was no more regarded with suspicion either by the Soviet Union or by the U.S. In fact, now it came to be regarded as a factor of peace and stability in the world. India became the beneficiary of change in the attitude of the Super Powers which was a major cause of concern for China. Finally, one more important development was that the Sino-Soviet *entente* broke-down in the late fifties when the Soviet Union decided on the strategy of peaceful coexistence with the U.S., inherent in which was also the strategy of keeping the power and influence of the Chinese Communist Party in check.

The rift between the two Communist giants - the Soviet Union and China broke-out concurrently with the growing friendly relations between the Soviet Union and India which were initiated in the mid-1950s. To complicate the matters between China and India and also between China and the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union began to incline favorably towards India rather than to its once ideological ally, China. Moreover, China also got infuriated over the Soviet attitude towards the Sino-Indian border skirmishes of 1959 in which Soviet Union showed its sympathy towards India. With these new

developments, India and Soviet Union signed a number of new economic aid and military agreements. Some US\$ 500 million was offered in mid-1960s in support of India's third five year plan. In April, 1961 Moscow sold India eight Antonov-12 four engine turboprop transport planes and agreed that forty Soviet pilots, navigators, and mechanics would accompany them. This was followed by twenty-four Ilushin-14 transports and ten MIL-4 helicopters capable of lifting troops and supplies to altitudes of 17,000 feet. Moreover, in August 1962, an agreement was reached for the purchase of twelve MIG-21s and the provision of the Soviet technical support for the manufacturer of these aircrafts under license in India.³² China objected to the Soviet aid to India due to the perception that India was being helped to become competitor to China and instead pleaded that such aid should be excessively given to Socialist countries. It is widely argued and asserted that it was due to this Soviet military and economic assistance to India that hardened the Chinese position on border issue between China and India.

So far as the United States was concerned, the U.S. administration under Kennedy viewed the Chinese attack on India as an "aggressive expansion of the Communist power", and argued that South Asia has become a major battleground between the free-world and the Communists. The U.S. administration provided all its support to India because it was regarded as a counter-weight to China in Asia both politically as well as militarily.³³ Thus it was in this context that the U.S. began to cultivate India as a counter-weight to China in Asia and thereafter, supported India by delivering a lot of military aid and economic assistance. In May 1960, the U.S delivered the U.S. C-119 aircraft to India and again in 1962, the U.S. rushed emergency military assistance to India, despite the fact that it would hamper its ties with its ally Pakistan.³⁴ Initially, the U.S. military assistance to India was modest which included only military advisors, ammunition, rifles, mortars and airlift support. However, by the mid-November, the two sides had established the "formal basis for military assistance" and the U.S. was preparing a US\$ 50 million package to equip five Indian divisions.³⁵ All these positive developments in the Indo-U.S. relations at a time when the Sino-Indian border conflict was mounting high, infuriated China and it criticized the both states of colluding together against China. China sought to establish an inseparable link between the anti-Chinese feelings in India and the U.S.

aid to India. China charged India of becoming a part of the anti-Chinese schemes of the U.S. imperialism.

Thus when both the Super Powers were supporting democratic India on the territorial dispute against Communist China, the Chinese were feeling isolated - diplomatically, politically and militarily. China perceived this support by both the Super Powers to India as being encircled by the hostile forces. It was in this dynamic/changing context of international relations that China initiated a massive attack on India on October, 1962 as a demonstration to the U.S. that it can defeat its Asian rival independent from Soviet led Socialist camp. So far as the Soviet Union was concerned, China wanted that by involving the Soviet Union into the Sino-Indian conflict, it would expose "Soviet Revisionism" and thereby score a point against Moscow in the burgeoning conflict between the two Communist giants. Moreover, being a Communist state, China expected that the Soviet Union would support its actions against India which was, in China's eyes, contemplating a hidden alliance with Washington against it and sought to "expose ideological hollowness of Moscow's support to India".³⁶ Moreover, China had expected that if the Soviet Union supported China in its war against India, it could naturally distance New Delhi from Moscow. Thus it is observed that apart from bilateral issues between China and India (particularly the border issue), the external factors also played an important role in the Sino-Indian War in 1962.

The consequences of the war for India were deep and far reaching as it suffered an unexpected defeat at the hands of Chinese. It radically altered and shifted India's basic understanding of the world forces. Before the Sino-Indian War, India had altogether refused to accept the division of world into two hostile camps, headed by the U.S. and the Soviet Union. However, in the post war years, India began to accept the bipolar reality of the world and as a result, changed its policy of equi-distance from two poles to equi-dependence on them.³⁷ In other words, India now began to follow a policy of bi-alignment (or double alignment) with the U.S. and the Soviet Union against China. India was compelled to seek military assistance from both the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

During the Sino-Indian War, the U.S. supported India both diplomatically and militarily. It sent the U.S. Navy into the Bay of Bengal to show the American support for

India. Moreover, the U.S. President while supporting India said that: "if China advanced any further they would be forcing the hands of the President of the U.S.A. to take some action".³⁸ Thus during the Sino-Indian War, the U.S. supported India against China and both the states came close to each other. The closeness between India and the U.S. caused some initial doubts in Moscow, but soon Moscow and Washington realized the common objective of building-up India against China. Their main aim was to prevent the emergence of China as a dominant state in the region. Thus there emerged the convergence of interests between the U.S. and the Soviet Union regarding the containment of China in South and South East Asia and India was in their calculations a suitable country in this global strategy against China. India took advantage of this changing perception of the Super Powers and began to get enormous military and economic aid from both Washington and Moscow.³⁹ China perceived Indian support by both the U.S. and the Soviet Union as being encircled by hostile forces.

In the post 1962 war period, India sought more and more economic and military aid from the U.S. However, the U.S. administration under Kennedy was reluctant to concede India's demand of long term commitment for military or economic assistance. Moreover, whatever assistance the U.S. promised, it was conditional subject to the resolution of Kashmir issue with Pakistan in which India was expected to make substantial concessions. More pertinently, the U.S. made a condition that it would provide military aid to India but that aid should be in no circumstances used against any other state in the region except China. This went in total contradiction to the unconditional military assistance by the U.S. to Pakistan.⁴⁰ So far as the economic assistance was concerned, the U.S. declined to invest in or assist Indian heavy industries. India thought it as the U.S. strategy to prevent New Delhi from becoming self-reliant in this sector and in this way ensure an Indian market for the U.S. products.

It was under these circumstances that India turned towards Soviet Union in order to acquire those things which the U.S. could not provide. On its part, the Soviet Union provided every kind of help to India on favorable terms and without any strings attached to it. Thereafter, India began to receive massive military assistance from the Soviet Union and the Soviet engineers, technicians and other experts arrived in India to assist New

Delhi in its endeavor to establish heavy industries. At that time, the prime motive of the Soviet Union in South Asia was to enlist India on its side as a counter-weight to China in the Asian "balance of power game".⁴¹ According to Jyotika Saksena and Suzette Grillot, it was the U.S. refusal to assist India's defense modernization effort that led to a major Indo-Soviet military ties.⁴² In the aftermath of the Sino-Indian War, another important development which took place was the growing friendly relations between China and Pakistan. The common hostility towards India in the changing regional and international environments thus became the foundation of the evolving relationship between Pakistan and China. The new relationship between China and Pakistan was strengthened when the two countries concluded a boundary agreement on 2 March, 1963 which demarcated the adjoining areas of Xijing province of China and some areas of Kashmir controlled by Pakistan.⁴³ The border settlement with Pakistan marked the beginning of what one scholar has characterized as the development of an "*entente cordiale*" between China and Pakistan.⁴⁴ In subsequent years, China and Pakistan coordinated their policies on a number of issues, often to India's distress.

The first test of Sino-Pak *entente cordial* was tested in 1965 when war broke-out between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and Rann of Kutch. In that war, China sided with Pakistan and threatened India with dire consequences. China extended its full support to Pakistan because it viewed India as a neo-colonialist state which was backed by the U.S. imperialism and the Soviet revisionists for containing China. Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai while criticizing the Soviet Union and the U.S. said that by not declaring India as an aggressor and pretending to be neutral, the U.S. and the Soviet Union were not distinguishing between the right and wrong and aggression and non-aggression.⁴⁵ To threaten India with opening a second front, China issued an ultimatum to India that it should dismantle all its military installations which it had erected at the border between Tibet and Sikkim within three days and solemnly pledge to abstain from any further hostile actions across the border.⁴⁶ However, it must be reiterated here that China's support to Pakistan in this war was mostly symbolic; it did not open a second front against India despite intimidating to do so.

On the other side, in spite of its alliance with Pakistan, the U.S. took a neutral position in that conflict and suspended the U.S. arms sales to both India and Pakistan. However, on the role of China in the Indo-Pak conflict, the U.S. warned China that it should stay-out of the Indo-Pak conflict otherwise it would face massive American retaliation.⁴⁷ Beyond that, the U.S. did not play any significant role in that conflict as it was preoccupied in the Vietnam War.

On the other side, it was the Soviet Union which played an important role by bringing both the warring parties to the negotiation table at Tashkent in 1966 which was chaired by Soviet Premier Alexi Kosygin.⁴⁸ Despite the basic difference in the Indo-Pak approaches due to Soviet mediation, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and President Ayub Khan reached an accord at the end of the talks. However, China attacked the Tashkent talks as "product of joint U.S.-Soviet planning" and alleged that in the name of good offices, the Soviet leaders were aiding the Indian aggressors to force Pakistan to accept Indian annexation of Kashmir as legitimate.⁴⁹ India repudiated the Chinese pretention to be the guardian of Asian countries and asserted that no country in Asia whether big or small will accept the dominance of Chinese. The involvement of external powers in Indo-Pak conflict and the China's siding with Pakistan in that conflict further led to deterioration of relations between China and India.

In the late 1960s, the Soviet and Chinese foreign policy interests came into conflict and their world views began to diverge rapidly. The Soviet Union remained wedded to a policy of peaceful co-existence and in search of *detente* with the U.S., whereas China developed a more radical policy against the imperialist West and the Soviet Union. China's anti-imperialist, anti-U.S. rhetoric became even more penetrating as it sought to make its point: the Soviet Union had grown soft on capitalism, while China has not. China complained bitterly of Soviet "socialist imperialism", arguing that it was linked with the U.S. "capitalist imperialism" to encircle China.⁵⁰ China also argued that increased Soviet leverage should be put at the service of the Socialist bloc but the Soviet Union provided military, political, and economic assistance to India rather than its major ideological ally China. Thus the Soviet Union began to perceive China as the major threat to its security and as a primary obstacle to the spread of their influence in

Asia. It was in this context that the Soviet President Brezhnev in 1969 proposed to introduce an Asian Collective Security System to check the China's influence. A number of South and South East Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, India, Pakistan, and Singapore were mentioned as possible members in this proposed new security system.⁵¹ However, this new proposed security system proposed by the Soviet Union received cold response from most of the Asian governments. India like other Asian countries did not show any interest in joining this group led by the Soviet Union. In spite of India's demonstration of foreign policy independent of the Soviet Union by not endorsing the Soviet view of forging Asian Collective Security System, China stated that "everyone knows that the Soviet revisionist renegade clique views the Indian reactionaries as important partners in its anti-China line up."⁵² Thus by the end of 1969, Sino-Soviet hostility had scaled new heights and India became an important factor in Sino-Soviet rift and at the same time Sino-Indian relations were greatly affected by the Soviet factor.

Alignments and Realignments: The period of 1970s

The decade of 1970s witnessed significant alignments and realignments in international affairs since the emergence of hostility between the two Super Powers - the U.S. and the Soviet Union. As China had now emerged as an Asian power, there was a shift from bipolar strategic balance to a development of triangular diplomacy among the three countries - the U.S., the Soviet Union, and China. Earlier it had been Moscow that had been able to play the China card. Washington's ability to play the same card promised to pay immeasurable dividends. The Chinese in turn, however, had no intentions of playing the pawn and instead sought to carve-out its own place as a major player in the Super Power game which subsequently affected its relations with India also.⁵³ Besides, in order to mitigate the international tension, the Super Powers at that time had several options. The first option was to enhance their defense capabilities more than that of their rivals; the second option was to just remain neutral; and the third option was to align with other countries in order to combine military strength. Among these three options, the U.S. and China chose the last option in order to maintain the balance of power vis-a-vis their common adversary, the Soviet Union.⁵⁴ Thus when Beijing and Washington took the first

step towards the normalization of relations in the early 1970s, the result was an end to great power bi-polarity and increased complexity in international relations.

The shift in relative power between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, with the rise of Soviet military power in Asia and the weakening of the U.S. position due to the Vietnam War, encouraged a fundamental shift in China's position from dual adversary policy of 1960s towards an alignment with the U.S.⁵⁵ It was possible due to the fact that there was a marked convergence of American and Chinese thinking about their major common problem i.e., the Soviet Union. In China's view, the pressing need to create the triangular balance of power was felt in 1969 during the Sino-Soviet border conflict, and thereafter, the fear that the Soviet Union might launch a massive attack on China. These apprehensions compelled China to forge new relationship with Washington by setting aside ideology in order to countervail Soviet threat.⁵⁶ Moreover, China's forging of new cooperative relationship with the U.S. was also motivated by the long-term aim of preventing Super Power collusion to contain China. The U.S. was also motivated in exploiting the Sino-Soviet schism to its own geopolitical advantage. The U.S. could now easily play the "China Card", and thereby exert a great pressure on the Soviets for greater responsiveness in the Super Power *detente* and other international issues.⁵⁷ Thus by developing a triangular relationship with China and Soviet Union, the U.S. could derive considerable diplomatic leverage from the dispute between the two Communist powers, even while refusing to take sides. In this new rapprochement process between the U.S. and China, Pakistan acted as a bridge and facilitator as it was in good relationship with both these powers. It was due to Pakistan's efforts that Henry Kissinger's and then President Richard Nixon's visit to Beijing was made possible in 1971 and 1972 respectively. It is widely argued that a *defacto* U.S.-China alignment emerged after these visits against the Soviet Union and Pakistan played a pivotal role in the emergence of such an alignment.⁵⁸ Moreover, this rapprochement between the U.S. and China represented the most significant strategic shift of the Cold War era by ending two decades Sino-American hostility. Now with the U.S.-China *entente*, the rectangular balance of power became a pentagonal one with the addition of China on the U.S. side.⁵⁹ For its important role in bringing the China and U.S. close to each other, Pakistan was rewarded in the shape of approving one time exception to prevailing American Weapon Transfer

Policy to this region. From this period onward, the U.S. made a distinction between major Communist powers that were friendly (China) and those that were hostile (the Soviet Union).⁶⁰

The new friendly relations between China and the U.S. facilitated by Pakistan raised fresh apprehensions in India about the possible Sino-American-Pakistan axis against India. This Indian apprehension was validated when the U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger stated that if war broke out in the Sub-Continent, India should not expect the U.S. to provide military and other support, as it had done in 1962 during the Sino-Indian border conflict.⁶¹ With these new developments, the Soviet and Indian interests began to converge as the Sino-Soviet hostility widened and India failed to attract the benign attention of the U.S. administration or to improve its relations with China. This situation persuaded Brezhnev to make a special relationship with India and both countries signed on 9 August 1971, 20 years Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. Under the provisions of this treaty, the Soviet Union pledged to help and protect India in the event of any aggression or threat of aggression.⁶² With the signing of this treaty, the threat of Sino-American-Pakistan axis against India was reduced to a great extent. After signing of this treaty, the Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh said in the Parliament that:

We shall not allow any other country or combination of countries to dominate us or to interfere in our internal affairs. We shall, to our maximum ability, help other countries to maintain their freedom from outside domination, and their sovereignty. We have no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, but this does not mean we shall look on as silent spectators if third countries come and interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, particularly our neighbors, as our own national interest could be adversely affected.⁶³

Thus with the signing of this treaty, India and the Soviet Union moved from non-alignment to a kind of alignment. From the Soviet perspective, the treaty was probably understood as a part of the planned network of bilateral treaties which would underpin Brezhnev's Asian Collective Security System and which was designed to isolate China. India's interests were pressing : to deter China threat in future and also to deter the U.S.

and China from intervening to help Pakistan and ensure Soviet diplomatic support, especially in the UN.⁶⁴ Thus, China's split with the Soviet Union, conflict with India and rapprochement with the U.S. meant that India and Soviet Union had acquired a new geo-strategic commonality of interests.

From the U.S. perspective, the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 ended any Indian pretence of being non-aligned and placed New Delhi fully in the Soviet-led camp. The U.S. reaffirmed its alliance with Pakistan, both as a counter-weight against Moscow's efforts to increase its position in South Asia and as a barrier to Indian efforts to achieve dominance in that region. Thus within the context of these new developments, the U.S. began to resume the arms supply to Pakistan that it had suspended during the Indo-Pak War in 1965. Moreover, the U.S. was now prepared to welcome Pakistan's growing military ties with China, which Beijing carefully justified not just as counter-balancing India, but also as containing the expansion of Soviet influence in Central Asia.⁶⁵ These developments made the possibility of a potential confrontation between the U.S.-China-Pakistan alignment on the one hand, and India-Soviet Union alignment on the other side. This tendency towards polarization appeared first during the Indo-Pak War on Bangladesh in 1971.

In that war between Indian and Pakistan, China extended its full support to West Pakistan and criticized India as reactionary expansionist. While criticizing India, Li Xianian in a statement said that "because the Indian government has been carrying-out subversive activities and military provocations against East Pakistan, the tensions on the Sub-Continent has been aggravated. The Chinese government and their people resolutely support the Pakistani government and its people in their just struggle against foreign aggression".⁶⁶ Thus China took a pro-Pakistan and anti-India stand in this conflict which further strained the already fragile relationship between China and India. So far as the U.S. was concerned, it criticized India by taking a firm stand in favor of the Sino-Pakistani position. The U.S. attempted to frighten India by raising the threat of a Chinese invasion if India did not cease its aid to the dissidents in the East Pakistan. The U.S. administration under Nixon took a pro China-Pakistan position out of the perception that India would invade West Pakistan also after eliminating Pakistan's rule in East Pakistan

and thereafter, would install a pro-India/pro-Soviet Union regime there and thereby pave the way for full Soviet domination of South Asia.⁶⁷ To demonstrate its support to Pakistan, the U.S. decided to send the U.S. Navy and the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise towards the Bay of Bengal on 10 December. By doing so, the U.S. also wanted to convey a clear message to their new ally China that the U.S. could be counted on to stand by Pakistan, an old 'friend' supposedly making the point that it could also be counted on to back China should the need arise.⁶⁸

The Soviet Union on the other side took pro-Indian stand and urged Pakistan to halt immediately its military repression in the East Pakistan and to negotiate peacefully with the representatives of the East Pakistan. Moreover, the Soviet Union also warned the Chinese against intervening in the conflict and said that if China interfered then the Soviet Union would not remain indifferent to the developments taking place in direct proximity of the borders of the Soviet Union. Moreover, reacting sharply to the Chinese criticism of the Soviet stand on the Indo-Pak conflict, the Soviet Union denounced the Sino-American designs to prevent the normalization of conditions in the Sub-Continent and accused them of planning to establish a "Sino-American condominium" in South Asia.⁶⁹

At the end of war, India achieved its main objective, the independence of East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh, despite Chinese and American joint opposition. Here comes the significance of the Indo-Soviet Treaty. Had there been no treaty, China would have certainly intervened on behalf of Pakistan. It was the fear of the Soviet Union which kept the Chinese away from marching into the Indian Sub-Continent.⁷⁰ China regarded India's victory over Pakistan as an increase of Soviet influence on China's Southern flank. Therefore, for China to reduce the increasing influence of Soviet Union on its Southern flank, it was necessary to improve its relations with India. Thus after the Indo-Pak War, China began to seek ways of reducing the Soviet presence in South Asia and welcomed the Simla Agreement of 1972 between India and Pakistan. So far as Bangladesh was concerned, although initially China did not recognize it and opposed its creation, it was slowly moving towards recognizing Bangladesh and establishing a working relationship with it because it realized that its policy of non-recognition would

push Bangladesh into Indo-Soviet sphere of influence which was detrimental to its security interests. Therefore, China was willing to establish relations with Bangladesh also.⁷¹

The Sino-Indian relations began to take a positive turn in the mid-1970s when in 1976 India and China finally exchanged ambassadors. According to John W. Garver, four major reasons compelled China to seek normalization of relations with India. First, till now India had emerged as a dominant power in South Asia after the dismemberment of Pakistan and India's nuclear tests in 1974. It was now apparent that confronting India would increase the potential costs for China. Second, since the 1960s, Beijing has seen Moscow and India as colluding to oppose China. This perception was reduced to some extent when India refused to sign an Asian Collective Security Treaty with Moscow in spite of Soviet insistence to do so. Third factor was the growing apprehension of China about the increasing influence of the Soviet Union in the region. In order to check this influence, China launched a new stage of active diplomacy. Mending ties with New Delhi was one important aspect of this new diplomacy. Fourth, with the initiation of Four Modernizations Programs in China after the death of Mao, creation of conducive environment for the successful implementation of these programs necessitated efforts to reduce tension and expand relations with most of China's neighbors, including India.⁷² Thus within the context of these internal and external compulsions, China sought to normalize its relations with India.

Meanwhile, for the first time in 1977, the non-Congress Party (Janata Party) came to power at the Union in India. The Janata government was certainly interested in improving India's relation with China. It was prepared to respond positively to every little gesture from the Chinese side. Despite warnings from the Soviet Premier Alexi Kosygin, the Indian government under Morarji Desai continued to make overtures towards China. The Desai led Janata government sought to distance New Delhi from Moscow by improving relations with Beijing. Chinese also realized the fact that the Indo-Soviet relationship was closely tied to Sino-Indian hostility. Therefore, an improvement in Sino-Indian relations would serve to distance New Delhi from Moscow and thereby fulfill China's main objective of reducing the Soviet influence in South Asia.⁷³ In

February 1979, India's External Affairs Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited China and the main agenda of his visit was to exchange views with Chinese leaders regarding the normalization of relations between the two states. It was agreed that the five principles of peaceful co-existence (*Panchsheel*) should be the basis of normalization of bilateral relations and the settlement of border dispute. However, while Vajpayee was still in China holding discussions with Chinese leaders, China attacked Vietnam. Deng Xiaoping, Chinese Premier while talking to media said "we shall teach Vietnam a lesson as we have taught one to India in 1962".⁷⁴ Subsequently, Vajpayee had to cut short his visit. Under severe criticism in Parliament, the Government of India finally denounced the Chinese action as an aggression against Vietnam. Thus, the Chinese aggression on Vietnam halted the positive environment which was created by Vajpayee's visit to China.

In the late 1970s, the configuration of international relations once again began to unfold new dynamics and changes when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan on December, 1979. The main aim of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was to secure many of its geopolitical interests which included to prevent the U.S. meddling in the Soviet Union's 'backyard', to check the Chinese influence in the region and to gain a highly strategic foot-hold in South West Asia. The subsidiary goal of the invasion was to secure an ideologically friendly regime in Afghanistan.⁷⁵ The Soviet incursion into Afghanistan triggered a wave of responses across the globe and particularly affected the security and foreign policy postures of the U.S., China and Pakistan. These countries emerged as the key actors in the unfolding situation whose perceptions, actions and interactions would determine the contours of the crises.⁷⁶ After Vietnam War, the watchword in U.S. foreign policy toward the Soviet Union was *detente*. This came to sudden end with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and initiated the new Cold War between the two Super Powers when Carter administration took a strong notice and thereafter, the Reagan administration revived the confrontational policies of the Cold War era.⁷⁷ So far as China was concerned, it perceived the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan as a part of Soviet move to secure warm-water ports on the Indian Ocean that could then be used to control sea lanes carrying vital materials to Western Europe and Japan. Regionally, it meant that Afghanistan no longer operated as a buffer between Western China and the Soviet Union.⁷⁸ The Soviet presence in Afghanistan also created major threats to the security of

China's close ally, Pakistan. Thus the U.S.-China-Pakistan joined hands to weed-out Soviets from Afghanistan. Such an operation was discussed by Chinese and American officials in 1980 in Beijing. During the talks, China and U.S. agreed to cooperate in aiding Pakistan against Soviets in Afghanistan.⁷⁹ Thus Pakistan was assigned a crucial role: the main channel for U.S. arms and a recruiting ground for the *Mujahideen* who were supposed to fight a guerrilla war against the Soviets in Afghanistan. The U.S. military aid to the *Mujahideen* rose from US\$ 120 million in 1984 to US\$ 630 million in 1987, bringing the accumulated total of the U.S. military aid to US\$ 2.1 billion.⁸⁰ The U.S. also provided its aid to the Afghan fighters against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan through allies such as Saudi Arabia, China, and Pakistan.

The Soviet incursion into Afghanistan also created security problems for India but in other ways. For instance, India got concerned on two counts; first it got concerned over massive military aid which the U.S. provided to Pakistan in excess to her legitimate needs; second, the U.S. turned a blind eye towards Pakistan's nuclear program and waived the anti-proliferation legislation in Islamabad's favor. Moreover, India did not look favorably towards the U.S. concepts of Rapid Deployment Forces (RDF) and also the formation of Central Command (CENT-COM) in 1983.⁸¹ All these developments were perceived by India as a threat to her interests as the situation in Afghanistan has brought danger closer to India. In December 1980, Mrs. Indira Gandhi the new Prime Minister of India hosted Soviet President Brezhnev's visit to India. She was determined to reconsolidate India's bonds with the Soviet Union which she believed the Janata government had weakened. However, at the same time, she was apprehensive of becoming tied too closely to the Soviet Union. She was aware of the fact that any policy of leaning towards the Soviet Union would not serve India's long term security interests. Instead India's long term interests could be served only by expanding New Delhi's ties with Washington and improving relations with Beijing. Thus India called for a political settlement of the Afghan crisis through negotiations among the parties concerned on the basis of withdrawal of foreign troops and the preservation of the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Afghanistan.

China on the other side, also came to the conclusion that more it denounced India, the closer it would push it towards the Soviet Union. Moreover, the domestic economic reforms of the late 1970s, which were intended to promote modernization and development and which marked the transition to the post-Mao era, were supplemented by an independent foreign policy of peace and development. This comprised steering clear of any alignments or alliances, promoting a peaceful and stable external environment and establishing friendly relations with all countries especially the neighboring countries.⁸² With this thinking and strategy, China began to cultivate balanced relations with both Super Powers - the U.S. and the Soviet Union and at the same time advocated peaceful co-existence with India. It was necessary from the Chinese point of view because it helped in weakening the Soviet opposition to Sino-Indian friendly relations and also mitigated Indian fear of the U.S.-Pak-China axis against India.

In order to carry forward this strategy, Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua visited India in June 1981. While in India, Huang called for India and China to seek common ground on major issues while preserving differences on minor ones. During his visit, the two sides agreed to begin discussions on the border issue and other bilateral exchanges. China also saw a limited disengagement from the U.S. and limited rapprochement with the Soviet Union as a way of demonstrating to India that China was not pro-American and anti-Soviet. Therefore, improved Sino-Indian relations would not undermine India's relations with the Soviet Union. The same demonstration would also reduce Soviet opposition to closer Sino-Indian ties and discourage the Soviet Union from using its influence to block Sino-Indian rapprochement.

On the other side, India was willing to normalize its relations with China after the possible thaw in Sino-Soviet relations (1982) and the greater distance between China and the U.S. Meanwhile, there were substantial improvements in the Indo-U.S. relations after the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's June 1985 visit to the U.S. The new Prime Minister was tending to open up and widen his options, in terms of closer ties with the U.S. rather than largely depending on the Soviet support. His Washington visit was successful to a great extent in the sense that the U.S. agreed to reduce all restrictions on

technological exports, and the Government of India agreed to provide conducive environment for the U.S. business.

With the development of these positive trends between the contending parties, another important development took place in 1985 when Mikhail Gorbachev took over as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. After taking the charge as the General Secretary, he took a number of new initiatives that transformed the nature of international relations in an unprecedented manner. So far as China was concerned, he made a series of offers to China to reverse the ideological and inter-state disputes which had marked their relationship for decades. In order to normalize relations with China, Gorbachev agreed to concede China's three demands such as drawing down the Soviet military presence on China's northern border, ceasing support for Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia, and withdrawal from Afghanistan.⁸³ China responded favorably to Gorbachev's overtures as it was already seeking to improve its relations with the Soviet Union. Thus, Gorbachev's reforms brought Moscow and Beijing closer which also meant that the "India" card was becoming less relevant in the Sino-Soviet relations.⁸⁴ When the Sino-Soviet relations began to normalize, at the same time, Sino-Indian relations once again began to deteriorate following the Indian allegations about Chinese infiltration in the Sumdurong Chu Valley in the Twang area which India claimed to be within its territory. Besides, there were two other developments that strained the Sino-Indian relations further. The first was the conferment of statehood to Arunachal Pradesh by India and the second was to organize military exercise (Operation Chequre Board 1986-87) along the Sino-Indian border by India.⁸⁵ The fresh tension on the border raised the apprehensions of second Sino-Indian border war. India naturally looked towards the Soviet Union for help in this possible conflict with China. However, the Soviet Union under Gorbachev instead of taking sides, called for a better relations between China, India and the Soviet Union so that no one will have to choose sides. China was swift in pointing the significance of this change in the Soviet-Indian relationship. Later on, this Soviet nudge proved an important factor in India's approach towards normalizing its relations with China which culminated in the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in December, 1988. It was the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister since Nehru's visit to Beijing in 1954 - resulted in a joint press communiqué that stressed the

need to restore friendly relations on the basis of five principles of peaceful co-existence (*Panchsheel*).⁸⁶ In China, Deng Xiaoping told Gandhi, "Let both sides forget the unpleasant period in our past relations, and let us treat everything with an eye on the future".⁸⁷ During the visit, both sides agreed to settle border issue through consultation and conciliation and for this purpose, a Joint Working Group (JWG) was formed. It was agreed that while seeking a settlement, relations would be developed in other fields to create conditions conducive to a fair and reasonable settlement of the border issue. Thus, the overall impact of these changing contours of international politics on India-China relations was relatively good.

End of Cold War and the Sino-Indian Rapprochement

The international system was fundamentally transformed between 1989 and 1991. The reunification of Germany, the "velvet revolutions" in Eastern Europe, and ultimately the disintegration of the Soviet Union were the developments which altogether transformed the geopolitical landscape of the international relations.⁸⁸ With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the bipolarity of the Cold War era came to an end and was replaced by the unipolarity with the U.S. as sole Super Power possessing an overwhelming military, economic and technical capability.

Asia, being one of the most important area of Cold War rivalries was also affected in a significant way. However, the two most important states in Asia whose strategic landscape was totally altered were India and China. For example, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union as a nodal power centre, India lost a reliable friend in international arena. Its impact was intense on India particularly on its armed forces because some 70 percent of aircraft and their parts and a high portion of other military hardware were sourced from the Soviet Union. Moreover, the diplomatic backing of the Soviet Union which India enjoyed throughout the Cold War period also vanished. As the global order was recasted and the old ideological impulses reordered, India like other states had to reorient its foreign policy to meet the challenges of this new reality.

China also lost importance which it enjoyed in the U.S. strategic calculations ever since the two powers formed an alliance against the Soviet Union. In such perspective,

China was left with no option but to adjust its foreign relations accordingly. Moreover, the end of bi-polarity and the emergence of the U.S as the sole Super Power, compelled China to think on the alternative approach and it initiated a policy of engagement with sober thinking about India. China's policy of maintaining good neighborly relations with India followed from its conscious strategy of seeking peaceful environment in its surrounding areas.

Thus the post-Cold War period witnessed the construction of Sino-India rapprochement. Both looked forward to build greater economic cooperation and good relations in general. Both nations realized the need of stabilizing the borders and further improve bilateral relations in an uncertain world order, which was largely unipolar. Both wanted to resist the U.S. attempts to dominate the global political structure and instead emphasized on a world order devoid of global hegemon. The two countries also shared commonality of interests on various international issues like climate change, issues related to international trade and to some extent on human rights. All these convergence of interests between China and India in the post-Cold War period was bound to have a positive impact on the evolution of Sino-Indian relations.

Conclusion

It is observed and concluded from the preceding analysis that besides the combined effects of bilateral factors and regional imperatives, the dynamics of Cold War politics between the U.S. and the Soviet Union remained major inputs into Sino-Indian relationship during the Cold War years. The relationship between India and China continued to be influenced (both positively as well as negatively) by the emerging international political configuration in the post-Cold War world which is characterized by the dominance of the sole Super Power the United States. This evolving dynamics and contemporary role of the U.S. as a factor in Sino-Indian relations would be examined and analyzed in the following chapters of this thesis.

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Chapter-III

U.S.-China Strategic Cooperation and Or Strategic Competition: India's Responses

Introduction

The relationship between China and the United States is one of the most important relationships in the contemporary world. The nature of this relationship is quite complex as the elements of cooperation and competition between the two countries exist side by side. This gives rise to an assorted picture of cooperation and competition - a condition what David Shambaugh call 'cooptation', and Zalmay Khalilzad terms 'congagement' to denote the mixture of engagement and containment in the relationship between the U.S. and China.¹ Broadly speaking, the U.S. policy toward China can be divided into two groups - the advocates of engagement and the proponents of containment. Each of these two groups have their own rationale to support their point of view. According to the advocates of engagement policy, the U.S. should engage China actively. The 'China threat' should not be articulated in a manner that turns it into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Such an approach is in adjacent to a favorable perspectives on China which predominates within the State Department. For instance, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed this view in 2009 when she remarked, "some believe that China on the rise is, by definition, an adversary. To the contrary, we believe that the U.S. and China can benefit from and contribute to each other's success."² Likewise, one of the eminent U.S. scholar Joseph Nye remarked in his speech, "if you treat China as an enemy, you are certain to have an enemy".³ The proponents of engagement policy held the view that it is difficult to predict with certainty that will the rise of China pose a threat to the U.S. in future or not. Therefore, the U.S. should bandwagon China and align it so closely to the United States that it will not challenge U.S. interests in future.⁴

On the other side, supporters of containment policy maintain that the strategic competition between China and the United States is inevitable. They are of the opinion that China's growing military and economic prowess and the U.S. reluctance of containing it, will ultimately result in fierce struggle and even direct confrontation

between the two states. The 'China threat' perception mainly predominates in the U.S. Defense Department. For instance, in 2007 the U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said, "I do not see China at this point as a strategic adversary of the U.S. It is the partner in some respects. It is competitor in some others. And so we are simply watching to see what they are doing".⁵ This statement clearly reflects that in future, China can emerge as a formidable threat to the United States. The U.S. defense experts maintain that even though China's military might is still lagging behind to that of the United States in terms of technology and overall defense expenditure, China has the potential to threaten U.S. interests in case of conflict with the latter. Currently, China is investing in building sophisticated means to negate the traditional U.S. advantages and this could eventually led to the creation of China-centric Asian bloc which would ultimately dominate Western-Pacific.⁶ Thus, the proponents of 'China threat' maintain that China's and the U.S.' interests are destined to clash with each other as China achieves the military and economic parity with the United States. Some of the U.S. defense strategic reports also reflect such apprehensions as discussed above. In the middle of these views as held by the two sides, the U.S.' China policy has swung back and forth and finally converged around the middle. Currently, the U.S. aims to combine engagement with containment or in other words the U.S. is engaging China but even as it does so, it is preparing itself for the eventuality of the future conflict.

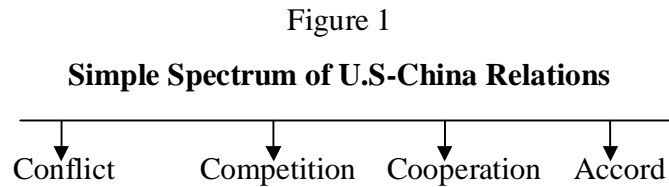
China on the other side, perceives the U.S. as one of the most formidable threat to its strategic interests. The strategic community in China often express the view that the U.S. is determined to prevent the rise of any challenger of which China is the most credible. The United States' major aim is to "westernize, split, and weaken" China. China also believes that the U.S.' fixed goal is to contain the rising China by enhancing its military presence around China's periphery and thus preventing China from playing its historic role as the "Middle Kingdom".⁷ Even the "engagers" within the U.S. would like to see China evolve towards a politically pluralistic democratic system. Therefore, the distinction between those who support engagement and those who advocate containment is only of strategy and not of goals - and the main goal of the U.S. strategy is to perpetuate its own global dominance and to thwart any attempt by any other state particularly China to alter that status-quo.

However, in spite of all these perceived threats and apprehensions from the United States, China has sought to maintain cooperative relations with the U.S. because in the current globalized world order, maintaining cooperative relations with the U.S. and downplaying the negative trends are more beneficial for China particularly for its economic development. Therefore, while dealing with the U.S., China has adopted Deng Xiaoping's advice - "be calm, keep low profile, hide your capacities and bide your time" as the guiding principle of its approach.⁸

The U.S. on the other side also holds the view that the cooperative relations with China is enormously significant irrespective of the fact whether China is perceived as strategic competitor or a partner. China, being the second largest economy with the formidable military might and above all, a regional power with significant influence in Asia is something which the U.S. cannot overlook. Furthermore, the trade and commercial relations established since the last 30 years between China and the U.S. provides a strong foundation to their relationship. As both the sides benefit from these economic ties, neither side would like to jeopardize such a relationship. For example, Michael O' Hanlon and Richard Bush (Brookings Institute scholars) noted that the, "most hypothetical causes of war between the United States and China turn out, upon inspection, to have little or no basis. The two countries will not duke it out simply to settle the question of who will 'run the world' in the twenty-first century".⁹ Extending the argument further, the duo noted that "especially the economic cooperation create a potent incentive for cooperative and sensible behavior between the two countries".¹⁰

Thus from the above discussion, it is observed that the relationship between China and the U.S. is increasingly one of "coopetation" and "competitive co-existence" wherein the two states co-exist but in a competitive manner. In such a complex type of relationship between China and the U.S., sometimes the competitive elements are more visible and sometimes the cooperative elements are more apparent. It is due to this complexity and duality of U.S.-China relationship that David Shambaugh states, "if one simply conceptualizes the extremes of conflict and accord at the two ends, then the middle is composed of the band between competition and cooperation. The U.S.-China relationship today operates in the spectrum between the competition-cooperation bands,

never achieving real accord and (hopefully) avoiding conflict".¹¹ Figure 1 shows a Simple Spectrum of U.S-China relations as sketched by Shambaugh.



Although, China and the U.S. find it difficult to co-exist, they do not have any other alternatives. In other words, the current relationship between China and the U.S. can be characterized as an unhappy marriage where the two dare not to divorce each other. This duality in U.S.-China relationship has further been described by an expert in these words, "the two huge powers have divergent interests but also deep interdependence. Working together is hard and frustrating, but not working together is worse".¹² Thus, it can be asserted that the two states will continue to manage this sort of relationship wherein cooperation and competition will exist side by side. In order to have a better understanding of the U.S.-China relationship, it is necessary to provide a brief outline of the areas of conflict and cooperation between these two powers.

Areas of Competition and Cooperation

There are various areas where the interests of China and the United States sometimes converge, sometimes diverge and even sometimes overlap. For instance, China's rise is one area which is a constant source of friction between the two powers. Its economic rise, military modernization, expanding diplomatic relations, and its drive for energy and other resources are of increasing concern for the United States.¹³ The deep rooted involvement of China in the regional security and economic affairs which is generally referred to as the "Rise of China" is also transforming inter-state relations".¹⁴ It is widely argued that China is rapidly gaining regional influence at the expense of the U.S. For example, Joshua Kurbntzick argues that China's "charm offensive" is allowing it to displace the U.S. as a dominant power in East Asia.¹⁵ Several U.S. defense reports also portray the rise of China as a security threat to the U.S. In its Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report of 2006, Pentagon stated that "China has the greatest potential to compete

militarily with the United States".¹⁶ Similarly, it was noted in a report prepared by Department of Defense (DOD) that "China's rise as a major international actor is likely to stand out as a defining feature of the strategic landscape of the 21st century" and that China's military "is now venturing into the global maritime dominion, a sphere long dominated by the U.S."¹⁷

Thus the rise of China and thereby its growing influence in the regional architecture in Asia and beyond is the main concern for the United States. The U.S. apprehensions are mainly based upon the possibility that if China dominates the regional institutions in Asia, it could steer them down to a path which would not be in the U.S. interests. Within these new developments which are occurring due to an unprecedented rise of China, some predict that powerful China would behave more aggressively towards the United States while others see an anxious U.S. responding to the China challenge by taking action to pre-empt or contain the latter.

In addition to the rise of China, the Taiwan issue has been a constant source of irritation between China and the United States since decades. Although, the two states have made a lot of progress in resolving the Taiwan issue,¹⁸ the U.S.-Taiwan relationship are still strong which involves a significant defense ties, extensive high level political interaction between Washington and Taipei and large arms sales to Taiwan. China on the other side issued a White Paper, *The Taiwan Question and the Reunification of China*, in 1993 which outlined China's stance on Taiwan in the following words:

The Chinese government has always firmly opposed any country selling any type of arms or transferring production technology of the same to Taiwan. All countries maintaining diplomatic relations with China should abide by the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and refrain from providing arms to Taiwan in any form or under any pretext. Failure to do so would be breach of norms of international relations and interference in China's internal affairs.¹⁹

The above mentioned principles have been guiding China's policy towards U.S. and its relations with Taiwan. Furthermore, on 14 February 2012 while visiting Washington, Xi Jinping (then China's Vice-President) reiterated that "the Taiwan issue

concerns China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and remains, as always, the most important and sensitive issue in U.S.-China relations".²⁰ In spite of the fact that Washington have recurrently assured Beijing that it does not support independence for Taiwan and adhere to its "One China Policy", but it has retained ambiguity about its willingness to defend Taiwan in a possible conflict with China. Therefore, the Taiwan issue continues to be a source of discord between China and the United States despite some positive developments in recent years between the two states relating to the issue.

Moreover, issues related to cyber security such as cyber espionage is also becoming one of the most important issue between China and the U.S. For instance, the Department of Defense in one of its annual reports to the Congress remarked that China's military is bolstering its information operations designed to weaken an enemy forces command and control system.²¹ Similarly, the report issued by the U.S. Office of the National Counter Intelligence (NCI) described Chinese actors as "the world's most active and persistent perpetrators of economic espionage and both the Russian and Chinese as "aggressive and capable collectors of sensitive U.S. economic information and technologies, particularly in cyber space".²² It was also stated in the report that "an onslaught of computer network intrusions originating from Internet Protocol (IP) addresses in China".²³ On the other side, China has always rejected the U.S. allegations of cyber intrusions by maintaining that all forms of computer hacking are illegal in China. Beijing has also been contending that it is not possible for the governmental agencies to check each and every computer related crime within its own borders.²⁴ In May 2014, Washington initiated formal action against five Chinese military officers by indicating them as having stolen trade secrets from the U.S. firms. China in retaliation, have placed several restrictions on the U.S. firms in China such as bans on the usage of their products, anti-trust investigations, etc.

Maritime disputes and conflicting claims particularly over South China Sea (SCS) and East China Sea (ECS) is another source of discord between China and the United States. Beijing has been highly critical of the U.S. military involvement in its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the U.S. intervention in the SCS disputes between China and its neighbors. As far as the dispute over SCS is concerned, Washington has confronted

Chinese measures to advance its territorial claims which include aggressive patrolling, increasing energy exploration and building structures in the SCS area. China on the other hand contends that its activities in these maritime arenas are its sovereign rights and alleges that the U.S. is stirring-up conflicts between China and its neighbors.²⁵ On the ECS, the U.S.-China conflict emanates from the Japan-China conflicting claims over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands and on China's ECS Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ).²⁶ On the former issue, Washington contends that the article 5 of the U.S.-Japan Defense Treaty covers the island and therefore, in case of conflict between Japan and China over the disputed Island, the U.S. would support Japan against China.²⁷ Washington also questions the ADIZ and has termed China's measure as a provocative attempt to change the status-quo pertaining to the ECS. However, China has been arguing that its ADIZ was established in accordance with the international law and its claims on Senkaku/Diaoyu islands are historically and legally valid. The increasing maritime tensions between China and the United States has been beautifully summarized by a Chinese scholar Zhu Fend in these words:

The strategic competition between China and major powers have gone beyond Cold War issues, such as Taiwan, Tibet, and human rights and extended to a new series of areas such as naval force and the maritime sphere of influence. As a result, maritime security has become a new hot-point in China's periphery security".²⁸

Human rights issues are also one of the important source of friction between the U.S. and China. The U.S. has been highly critical of China for its human rights violations which include excessive use of violence by security agencies, torture, strict censorship on media, unlawful detention of political opponents, forced one child policies, and harsh treatment meted out to many religious minorities such as Falun Gong adherents, Uighurs and Tibetans.²⁹ From time to time, the successive U.S. administrations have pressed China to improve its humans rights records. For example, while Clinton administration sought to improve overall bilateral relationship with China but at the same time pressed China to curb its human rights abuses. Similarly, while Bush and Obama administrations sought to forge cooperative relationship with China but at the same time disagreed with Beijing on many issues relating to human rights. In addition to it, the U.S. State

Department in its annual human rights reports have criticized China recurrently for "human rights violations" and "poor human rights records".³⁰

China, on the other side, has always viewed the U.S. lecturing on human rights issues as an interference into the internal affairs of China. Beijing has been highly critical of the U.S. suggestions that it must implement what it calls "western style of government".³¹ In order to counter the U.S. annual reports on human rights regarding China, China is now responding with its own human rights reports on the U.S. For instance, in February 2014, China's State Council Information Office issued its own White Paper on the U.S. human rights record. While criticizing Washington for human rights violations, the report stated that, "U.S. carefully concealed and avoided its own human rights problems like civilian deaths in foreign drone strikes, 'rapt' domestic gun violence and grave employment situation".³² Thus these reports and counter reports on human rights violations by the U.S. and China has been a constant source of friction between the two countries.

The economic and trade relations between China and the U.S. have witnessed both competition and cooperation since the past three decades. For instance, Washington complains that in spite of the fact that Beijing has liberalized its economy to a great extent, it continues to maintain a number of state controlled policies that distorts trade and investment flows. The major U.S. complaints related to trade against China include China's efforts to maintain an undervalued currency, its mixed record on implementation of World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations, theft of intellectual property rights (IPR), alleged widespread cyber espionage against the U.S. firms and its governmental support to promote its own firms.³³ The U.S. contends that these policies are harmful to U.S. economic interests and often create irritants in the bilateral relationship between the two states. On the other side, China has also been critical of the U.S. restrictions on exports of high-tech products to China, the U.S. impediments to Chinese investment in the U.S., countervailing duties against Chinese imports, the U.S. dominated international monetary order and the excessive U.S. trade negotiation demands.³⁴ Regarding the latter, China has always sought a greater role in the global financial institutions such as World bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), etc. For this purpose, China helped to

organize a summit of the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC) to better articulate this message.

However, it must be reiterated here that the U.S.' and China's economic interests also converge to a great extent in spite of some frictions related to trade as discussed above. It can be discerned from the fact that the U.S.-China trade rose steadily after the two states established formal ties in 1979, signed bilateral trade agreement in July 1979, and gave each other Most Favored Nation (MFN) status in 1980. In 1979, total trade between China and the U.S. was only US\$ 2 billion which rose to US\$ 562 billion at the end of 2013.³⁵ In 2014, the bilateral merchandise trade between the U.S. and China was US\$ 590 billion. Moreover, China is now the largest U.S. trading partner (after Canada), the third largest U.S. export market (after Canada and Mexico), and the largest source of U.S. imports.³⁶ In addition to it, bilateral investment has also played an important role in the U.S.-China economic relations. A major portion of China's investment in U.S. is comprised of U.S. securities, while FDI constitutes the bulk of U.S. investment in China. China's holding of U.S. treasury security raised from US\$ 118 billion in 2002 to US\$ 1.27 trillion in January 2014, making China largest holder of U.S. treasury securities.³⁷ Thus the increasing economic relations have brought enormous benefits to the two countries. Moreover, it is widely believed that the deepening economic interdependence between the U.S. and China will help balance conflicting interests in the political arenas and thereby sustain a stable bilateral relationship.

Just like economic relations, the issues related to protection of global environment is also one such area which is characterized by both convergence and divergence. More pertinently, the two countries differ on who should bear more responsibility in addressing the problem of global climate change. From the U.S. perspective, China should accept mandatory emissions targets and more demanding compliance schedules because it is the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter. China's position in contrast is that it deserves less demanding obligations because it is a developing country. In addition, China argues that developed countries like the United States should contribute significant funds and technological assistance to assist developing countries for reducing their emissions.³⁸ To press its stand on the environmental issues in a more coherent manner, China has

attempted to build countervailing alliances with other developing countries such as India, Brazil, etc.

However, in spite of these divergences related to environment issue, both sides understand the seriousness of the issue as well as the need for individual and joint efforts to address this global problem. In this regard, at the recently concluded Strategic and Economic Dialogue that was held in Beijing in July 2014, China and the U.S. agreed to cooperate on and share knowledge pertaining to energy saving technologies, unconventional energy exploration and renewable energy.³⁹ Moreover, as the largest greenhouse gas emitters, China and the U.S. are undoubtedly the two crucial players in creating a new environmental regime. According to one estimate, China is the world's largest emitter of CO₂ (26 percent of world emissions in 2010), followed by the United States (17 percent), and their joint efforts are necessary for successful global reduction.⁴⁰ Thus, on environmental issues, the interests of the U.S. and China sometimes converge and sometimes diverge which also affects their overall relationship to some extent.

From the above analysis it is observed that there are more divergences in U.S.-China relations than convergences. While there are some important areas where both the states find convergence of interests but still they have different approaches over these fields as well. For example, despite growing commercial ties, the bilateral economic relationship has become increasingly complex and fraught with tensions. In this regard, one study estimated that Chinese IPR infringement cost the U.S. economy up to US \$240 billion annually.⁴¹ Likewise, the U.S. and China do have many reasons to cooperate on counter-terrorism, but they also differ on various issues relating to this problem. For the U.S., Tibetan and Uighur movements in China are legitimate political protests while China treats them as an acts of terrorism and threat to its security.⁴² The United States treats Iran as the leading sponsor of state terrorism and as an extremist nation while China sees it as a legitimate regime with which the nuclear and other issues can be sorted-out through proper dialogue.⁴³ Moreover, the U.S. alleges that China continues to transfer missile technology and raw materials to Iran that can be used in production weapons of mass destruction (WMD).⁴⁴ Same is the case with other issue such as North Korea, environmental issue, maritime issue, etc. where both the states find enough

incentives to cooperate with each other but at the same time are at odds with each other on the same issues. On the basis of this assessment, it can be asserted that the competitive elements in U.S.-China relations are becoming more apparent and prominent than the cooperative elements. However, in spite of these negative trends, neither side wants an open conflict because such a situation will inflict heavy costs on both of them. As one commentator noted following a March 2009 naval incident, "the U.S. might have decided to press its case. But it would then have to face the reality that its defense is crucially supported by the very country it wanted to confront".⁴⁵ Similarly former Prime Minister of China Wen Jiabao while talking about the possible confrontation with the U.S. stated that, "We have lent a huge amount of money to the U.S. Of course we are concerned about the safety of our assets."⁴⁶ These two statements highlight the fact that why the U.S. and China do not divorce each other in spite of their unhappy marriage.

India's Perceptions

Most of the issues between China and the United States which has been discussed in the above section does not directly relate to India except the rise of China. The rise of China and thereby "China threat" is a cause of concern to both New Delhi and Washington. On some other issues like global environmental problem and WTO rules, India being a developing country feels more comfortable in aligning with China than with the United States. Moreover, sometimes India perceives the U.S.-China cooperation with misgivings and fears that they might adversely affect her interests. This is because there is a history of the United States and China colluding against India, and such collusion has in the past seriously undermined India's security. The U.S.-Pakistan-China nexus against India in the 1970s and 1980s, is still fresh in the minds of Indians.

Thus, there persists within India the perception that when U.S.-China relations are at their height and when they are in decline, both countries try to find common cause by "ganging up" against India.⁴⁷ Such collusion between the U.S and China against India occurred several times even in the post-Cold War era. For instance, the China-U.S. Joint Statements of 1997, 1998, and then again in 2009 were perceived by India going against her interests as these Joint Statements clearly indicated the U.S.' willingness to allow China to exercise her supervisory role in the South Asia even at the cost of India's

interests. In this regard, G. Parthasarthy (former ambassador to Burma) noted that, "Whether it was the Bangladesh Conflict of 1971 or in the Clinton-Jiang Declaration in the aftermath of our nuclear tests, China has never hesitated to use its leverage with the Americans to undermine our security".⁴⁸ Likewise, the United States' endorsement of Pakistan (an all weather friend of China) as a 'frontline' state in the U.S. led war on terrorism in the post-9/11 years, only exacerbated India's fears. Although, New Delhi's relations with both these powers have improved a lot in the recent years and especially the growing strategic partnership with the United States, it remains watchful of the U.S.-China relationship, especially in view of its oscillating nature. It is within these perspectives that this chapter analyses and examines the nature of the U.S.-China relationship in the post-Cold War period. As pointed out in the introductory part that the nature of their relationship is dual - wherein cooperation and conflict "co-exist" side by side, the main aim here is to analyze those dynamics and factors which prompts both the U.S. and China to come close toward each other at some point and suspicious at some other time. In both these cases, how India's security interests are affected, and if they are affected then what are India's responses in this regard? These are the critical questions which will be discussed at length in the following pages of this chapter.

U.S.-China Relations in the Post Cold War Period

In the post-Cold War period, the U.S. reoriented its foreign policy in a substantial way with regard to China and other issues of regional and international significance. As the opposition to the Soviet Union no longer drove U.S. foreign policy; promotion of democratic values, economic interests, and human rights were among concerns that gained greater prominence in the U.S. foreign policy. Analyzing these changes and reorientations in the U.S. foreign policy and a new grand security strategy in the post-Cold War era, Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross identified four relatively distinct and competing strategies such as neo-isolationist, selective engagement, cooperative security, and primacy. Although China's role in these strategies was not discussed explicitly, each strategy's basic objectives and premises suggest how China might be perceived and treated.⁴⁹ Similarly, Robert G. Sutter argues that there emerged three distinct schools of thought which provided different views about the foreign policy posture which the U.S.

should adopt in the context of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Since then, it is these three schools of thought which has shaped and guided the U.S foreign policy towards China. Here it becomes imperative to give a brief account of these three schools of thought as outlined by Robert Sutter to better understand the U.S. policy towards China in the post-Cold War era.

The first school of thought argued that there was a relative decline in the U.S. global power and therefore, questioned the U.S. ability to protect its interests abroad. They stressed that the present circumstances required the U.S. to work closely with traditional allies in Asia like Japan but at the same time urged caution in its policy towards other regional powers such as China, India and Russia. The underlying principle was that these countries did not want regional instability as they were preoccupied with their internal development issues. In such circumstances, they sought cooperative economic and political relationship with the United States. Thus it was in the best interests of the U.S. according to this school of thought to work closely with these governments wherever their interests converge.⁵⁰ The second school of thought which is often called "American First" or "Neo-isolationist" stressed that the U.S. should reduce its international activity including military interventions and instead should renew its focus on solving domestic problems in the United States. Thus, they called for extensive reduction in spending for international engagements, favoring the U.S. pullback from foreign bases and major cuts in foreign assistance programs.⁵¹ A third school of thought stressed that the U.S. should promote its economic, political and military interests more vigorously and should use its power to pressure those countries which do not conform to the U.S. backed norms on an appropriate world order. Supporters of this stance wanted the U.S. to maintain military forces with the world wide capabilities and to minimize compromise in promoting the U.S. values and interests.⁵² As far as the U.S. policy towards China was concerned in the immediate post-Cold War years, advocates of the third group - .proponents of active U.S. leadership and international intervention - were forceful in calling for policies opposing Chinese human rights violations, weapons proliferation, and protective trade practices. However, in the later years, the U.S. policy towards China has been vacillating between these three schools of thought i-e.,

sometimes competitive elements were more apparent and sometimes cooperative elements were more stressed.

The end of Cold War also compelled China to reorient her foreign policy in a significant way. As defined in a series of White Papers published by the State Council Information Office since 1995, China's new security concept states that the post-Cold War order requires a more pragmatic security policy based on "mutual trust, mutual equality, and cooperation".⁵³ This new security concept was adopted by China to reassure its neighbors and to the world at large that its rising military power and economic development would not be a threat to them in any way. By adopting this new approach, China had multiple goal in view to accomplish such as to defuse international instabilities that could negatively affect her own development, trying to expand China's own economic rise in ways that would not be perceived by her neighbors as threatening and also to balance U.S. global power in a manner that serves China's interests.⁵⁴ Thus economic development, internal stability and trade became more prominent features of Chinese politics. To achieve all these aims, China adopted the following features in her foreign policy in the post-Cold War period:

- I. To develop friendly and cooperative relations with all countries especially with its neighbors.
- II. To develop more diverse and balanced relationship with all major powers of the world.
- III. To stabilize U.S.-China relations by forging cooperative relations and avoiding confrontation with the United States.⁵⁵

China also realized the fact that the United States will be an important power in stabilizing the Asia-Pacific region and in addressing other global issues. In this context, it was deemed necessary to forge cooperative relations with the U.S. Moreover, the growing trade relations with the U.S. compelled China to pursue political engagement. However, how much China should enhance its economic and political engagement with the United States while consolidating authoritarian rule and economic reforms at home was resolved in 1992 when Deng Xiaoping advocated continued comprehensive economic reforms and opening to the benefits of foreign trade, investments and

technology transfer.⁵⁶ Thus, Chinese leaders focused on maintaining internal stability as they maneuvered to sustain workable economic relations with the U.S. but at the same time repulsed some of the U.S. initiatives that infringed on China's internal affairs and sovereignty issues such as Taiwan. China's general policy towards the U.S. was formulated as "increase trust, reduce trouble, develop cooperation and avoid confrontation".⁵⁷ In short, in the post-Cold War years, Chinese leadership emphasized on the development of cooperative and constructive relations with the U.S. on the basis of equality and mutual benefits by advocating the principle of seeking common ground while reserving differences.

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, it was the President George H.W. Bush (1989-1993) who initiated the post-Cold War relations with China. The main focus of the U.S. policy under his administration was to boost economic and security cooperation with China which was later described by Bush as the policy of 'engagement'.⁵⁸ He took various initiatives during his administration in dealing with severe problems in the U.S.-China relations which were caused by Tiananmen incident⁵⁹ and the decline in U.S. strategic interests in China as a result of the collapse of Soviet Union. He adopted secret diplomacy to maintain constructive communication with Chinese leaders when he sent his National Security Advisor and the Deputy Secretary of State on secret missions to China in July and December 1989.⁶⁰ The U.S. recognized the fact that China's cooperation was important in addressing various global problems like environment, trade, nuclear proliferation and other issues. However, the most important factor which brought the two powers closer toward each other was the Gulf War in 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait. While the U.S. needed China's support in the UN Security Council, the latter took advantage of the opening, gaining points by acting cooperatively.⁶¹ However, in the concluding years of his administration, President George H.W. Bush came to conclusion that despite his friendly gestures towards China, the latter was not showing much flexibility as was expected on various issues which were of great concern to the United States. Thus he adopted tough approach on various issues relating to China. For example, the Bush administration upgraded the U.S. relations with Taiwan by sending a cabinet level official to Taipei in 1992. He also announced that there would be no limits on the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan set in accord with the August 1982

U.S. Communiqué with China. In this regard, Bush administration agreed to sell 150 advanced F-16 jet fighters to Taiwan in 1992.⁶² However, in spite of this tough approach adopted by Bush administration on Taiwan, he made special efforts to ensure that the U.S. continued most favored nation tariff status for China.

Clinton Administration (1993-2000)

The first Clinton administration (1993-1996) was by and large conciliatory towards China in spite of controversies with it. However, during the much of the election campaigning, the Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton had been very critical of the Bush administration's China policy. Clinton even accused President Bush of "coddling of dictators of Beijing."⁶³ It was a trend in the United States in 1990s that the presidential candidates used issues related to China as a convenient means to pursue political ends. Thus for candidate Clinton, using the 'China card' by criticizing the incumbent President proved an effective way to take votes from the latter.⁶⁴ As such, after becoming the U.S. President, Clinton had to introduce new policy towards China which would have been distinct from the preceding Republican administration. But the new China policy which was adopted by the new administration was not much different from the earlier administration of George H.W. Bush; though Clinton called his China policy a "comprehensive engagement". The main purposes of the policy of comprehensive engagement were three fold; (i) to seek all of the U.S. interests at the proper level and with appropriate intensity required, (ii) to enhance mutual confidence and engagement with China where the interests of the two converge, and (iii) reconcile the diverging interests between the two countries through dialogue.⁶⁵ However, this new China policy was in effect not different from those of the Bush administration.

In the initial years the Clinton administration faced the issue of renewal of the Most Favored Nation (MFN) status to China. There were some sections in the U.S. particularly the business groups who endorsed the view that the MFN status to China should be renewed without much strings attached to it. On the contrary, human rights groups in the United States pressurized Clinton administration to link China's MFN status with its human rights policies. Ultimately, Clinton renewed the MFN status by linking its renewal to China's performance on improving its human rights records.⁶⁶ However, on 26

May, 1994, despite the poor human rights record of China, the Clinton administration decided to delink human rights improvement to trade relations. This was a major change in the U.S. policy which put an end to the ritual of annual renewal of China's MFN status. For China, it was a major diplomatic gain as it has sought this delinking from several years. Thus the U.S. decision of delinking MNF renewal to human rights progress in China created a positive stasis in U.S.-China relations. However, this positive trend soon began to disappear when Clinton decided to allow the Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui to visit Washington in June, 1995. The U.S. decision created a major crisis and military face-off between Washington and Beijing over Taiwan in 1995-1996.⁶⁷ This was the first U.S.-China military confrontation in three decades and prospect of war over Taiwan suddenly became more tangible. During these years, India was not much concerned or affected by the U.S.-China relations. New Delhi's ties with both these powers were evolving towards a positive direction. The positive trend in Sino-Indian relations was initiated with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in 1988. This trend was further solidified in 1993 when the two countries signed the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility on the Sino-Indian border which was followed by an Agreement on Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) in 1996.⁶⁸ At the same time, New Delhi's relations with Washington were also evolving towards a positive direction.

However, during the second term of President Clinton, the U.S. administration sought to promote cooperative relations and avoid repetition of dangerous crisis with China as were witnessed over Taiwan in 1995-96. In his first State of the Union Message in 1997, President Clinton sounded more positive about China than at any time in his first four years. In several other speeches, he outlined the U.S. interest in "engaging" rather than "containing" China, and fostering cooperation, not conflict.⁶⁹ The U.S. needed China's support on various international issues like nuclear proliferation, terrorism and North Korea. Since then, the Clinton administration sought to stabilize the relationship with China with some success in the following fields:

- I. In various inter-governmental areas such as commerce, arms control, immigration and drug law enforcement, working dialogues were intensified.

- II. Even while policy differences persisted, the Clinton administration has reassessed a strategic dialogue with China's military and civilian establishment to enhance confidence building measures (CBMs).
- III. China's increasing integration into the international institutional order was encouraged by the Clinton administration. Progress in this area has included China's accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), The Comprehensive Test ban Treaty (CTBT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Biological Weapons Convention.⁷⁰

Thus it is observed that the U.S.-China relations became stable and positive during the second term of Clinton administration. This positive trend in the bilateral relations between the two countries was further solidified in October 1997, when China's President Jiang Zemin paid a state visit to the United States. The visit was important in the sense that in the past 12 years, it was the first state visit by any Chinese President to the United States. During the visit, it was decided by the two sides that they would work towards a "constructive strategic partnership".⁷¹ According to the Joint Statement which was issued during Jiang's U.S. visit, the two Presidents agreed that, "while China and the U.S. have areas of both agreement and disagreement, they have a significant common interest and a firm common will to seize opportunities and meet challenges cooperatively".⁷² The two sides also agreed to cooperate "in maintaining global and regional peace and stability; promoting world economic growth; preventing the proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction; advancing Asia-Pacific regional cooperation; strengthening bilateral exchanges and cooperation in economic development, trade law, and environmental protection".⁷³ As the two Asia-Pacific countries, both leaders stressed that "it is in the interest of the two countries to maintain peace and stability in other important regions, including the Middle East, the Gulf, and South Asia".⁷⁴

It is evident from these provisions contained in the Joint Statement that it covered a broad spectrum of areas ranging from regional cooperation to international issues on which the two sides resolved to cooperate with each other. While doing so, it was also decided that those issues on which the two countries held divergent views (such as human

rights and Taiwan) should not come into the way of overall bilateral cooperation. This growing intimacy between China and the United States was not a welcome development for India. As is evident from the above statement, South Asia was also identified as one of the several areas where the United States and China resolved to cooperate with each other in maintaining the regional peace and stability. This development was perceived in India as going against its overall security interests. According to an Indian analyst, "In Indian eyes, the October 1997 Sino-U.S. Joint Statement suggested that under the wings of the United States, China might play a wider role in South Asia".⁷⁵ Moreover, India accused China that during occasional 'strategic dialogues' between the U.S. Secretary of State and China's Foreign Minister in 1997-98, Beijing has often turned the subject to India and South Asia to undermine India's strategic interests and its role in the South Asian region. In this context, it became strategic necessity for India to uncouple this emerging alignment between China and the United States and wean-away Washington from Beijing. For this purpose the first step which India took was to conduct nuclear tests in May 1998 and citing "China threat" as the rationale for its nuclear test. Though this step initially generated negative response from the United States, in the long run New Delhi was successful in getting U.S.' understanding for Indian sensitivities regarding the China's growing role in South Asia.

However, India's nuclear tests in May 1998, created an immediate convergence of interests between Beijing and Washington vis-a-vis New Delhi. China was successful to align the United States against India. Moreover, nuclear proliferation was itself an important ingredient of Clinton's South Asia policy which provided further impetus to the U.S.-China understanding against India's nuclear tests. It was in this context that during Clinton's visit to Beijing in 1998, both the countries issued on 27 June, a "Sino-U.S. Presidential Joint Statement on South Asia". The Joint Statement urged both India and Pakistan in the wake of nuclear tests by these two countries, "to stop all further nuclear tests and adhere immediately and unconditionally to the (Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty), to refrain from weaponization or deployment of nuclear weapons and from testing or deployment of missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons".⁷⁶ For the peaceful resolution of all disputes between India and Pakistan, the statement reiterated that, "we are committed to assist where possible India and Pakistan to resolve peacefully

the difficult and long standing differences between them including the issues of Kashmir".⁷⁷ On the shared responsibilities of the United States and China, the statement noted, "the United States and China have long sought friendly relations with both India and Pakistan. We affirm this goal and our hope that we can jointly or individually contribute to the achievement of a peaceful, prosperous and secure South Asia".⁷⁸

Thus, Clinton's visit to China, and the issuance of Sino-U.S. Joint Statement on South Asia was regarded by China as a great diplomatic victory vis-a-vis India. Predictably, from India's perspective the evolving U.S.-China close relations on matters affecting South Asia was not a welcome development. The Sino-U.S. Joint Statement on South Asia was described in an Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement on 27 June 1998 in the these words, "India categorically rejects the notion of these two countries arrogating to themselves joint or individual responsibility for 'the maintenance of peace, stability and security in the region'. This approach reflects the hagemonistic mentality of the bygone era in international relations and is completely unacceptable and out of place in the present day world".⁷⁹ It further stated:

The Statement contains a number of references that have directly or indirectly contributed to the unabated proliferation of nuclear weapons and delivery systems in our neighborhood, and now presuming to prescribe norms of non-proliferation. We would like to make it clear that India cannot consider the suggestions contained in the statement for curtailing our nuclear weapons or missile development programs. India will continue to take decisions in this regard on the basis of its own national security requirements.⁸⁰

On its relations with Pakistan, the statement noted that, "India's desire to develop friendly and peaceful relations and a stable structure of cooperation with Pakistan does not require reiteration. The way of achieving these objectives is through direct bilateral dialogue".⁸¹ So far as the public opinion in India was concerned, it was strongly critical of the U.S. for its failure to understand the complexity of India's security environment, as well as its apparent willingness to confer upon China an oversight role in South Asia. They also criticized China for its double standard in being unwilling to accept India's case for the same reasons China had articulated when it developed its nuclear bomb in

1964.⁸² Moreover, China's condition that it would support CTBT only when India signs it was viewed in New Delhi as an attempt by China to "strip India of its nuclear weapons capability".⁸³ India also wondered how China could be the part of non-proliferation efforts when it has helped Pakistan to develop her nuclear and missile program. Thus it was in the backdrop of President Clinton's attempts to establish a U.S.-China condominium (although short lived) with China's President Jiang Zemin in 1997-98 that encouraged India to openly advance its nuclear program in May, 1998. Overt nuclearization was apparently aimed at bolstering India's position in its dealings with China, especially to make China sensitive to the core Indian security concerns.⁸⁴ Moreover, India demonstrated an unprecedented flexibility in its foreign policy by working on new security alignments. In this direction, New Delhi made renewed attempt to court Southeast Asian countries that share long-term concerns about Chinese interests and behavior in the region.⁸⁵ For instance, New Delhi signed a defense agreement with Indonesia, held joint naval exercises with Vietnam, and started exercises with Japanese coast guard to combat piracy. It also started to strengthen its ties with the military Junta in Myanmar (Burma) to counter growing Chinese influence in that country.⁸⁶

On the other hand, China was contended to play along with the United States and attempted to take the moral high ground vis-a-vis India. On the bilateral plane also, the October 1997 and the June 1998 summit meetings between Clinton and Jiang marked a turning point in the U.S.-China relationship and were crucial events in furthering the strategy of comprehensive engagement between the two powers.⁸⁷ More particularly, Chinese leaders were satisfied with the progress they had made in normalizing relations with the U.S. from low points after the Tiananmen incident of 1989, the disintegration of Soviet Union and the confrontation over Taiwan in 1995-1996. In the light of these new positive developments, the Summits of 1997 and 1998 represented the capstone of normalization effort, in effect strongly legitimizing the Chinese leaders at home and abroad - a key Chinese goal in the post-Cold War era. Once this was accomplished, Chinese leaders could turn their daunting domestic agenda with more assurance that the key element of U.S.-China relations was now on more stable ground. Besides the normalization of political relations, the economic cooperation between China and the

United States also witnessed a spectacular upward trajectory during this period as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
China-U.S. Bilateral Merchandise Trade, 1993-2000
(U.S. Department of Commerce Statistics in billions of U.S. dollars)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Exports to China	8.77	9.29	11.75	11.99	12.86	14.26	13.1	16.3
Imports from China	31.54	38.78	45.56	51.51	62.56	71.16	81.8	100.0
Total Trade	40.31	48.07	57.31	63.46	75.36	85.42	94.9	116.3
Trade Balance	-22.77	-29.49	-33.81	-39.52	-49.70	-56.90	-68.7	-83.7

Source: Xianquan Xu, "Sino-U.S. Economic and Trade Relations", p.239, Available at <https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/.../MR1300.ch11.pdf> (Accessed on 22 September, 2015).

Thus the total trade flows between the United States and China as shown in the above Table, increased from US\$ 40.31 billion in 1993 to US\$ 116.3 billion 2000 with threefold increase. The U.S. exports increased from US\$ 8.77 billion in 1993 to US\$ 16.3 billion in 2000, a two fold increase. Imports rose from US\$ 31.54 billion to US\$ 100.0 billion in the same period, more than threefold increase. As a result, the U.S.-China trade deficit increased US\$ 87.7 billion at the end of 2000, a fourfold increase. It is also observed that the economic cooperation was an important aspect of U.S.-China relations in the post-Cold War era. In terms of economic interests, the U.S. was more inclined toward China than India due to its (China's) more advanced stage of economic development vis-a-vis India.

The U.S.-China relations in the first decade of twenty first century began to evolve towards a positive equilibrium. It was due to the fact that both the states have become preoccupied with other issues and in such an environment they were reluctant to exacerbate tensions with one another. Moreover, increasing economic interdependence and cooperation on various important issues in Asia and the world at large compelled both the countries to pursue constructive and positive relations. However, in spite of these positive trends and cooperative relations between China and the U.S., both

countries continued to harbor deep suspicion about each other's intentions and actions. For example, China's Defense White Paper of 2000 stated that 'certain big powers' (apparently the U.S.) are creating instability and 'threatening world peace' by pursuing neo-interventionism, new gunboat policy, and neo-economic colonialism. The document links such new problems to 'hagemonism' and the hagemon's proclivities for playing 'power-politics'.⁸⁸ While commenting on international security situation, the White Paper stated that there are 'new negative developments in the security situation' in the region which are directly related to U.S. actions, including a stronger U.S. military presence in the region, consideration of the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act by the 106th Congress, consideration of theater missile defense (TMD) deployment, and revision of the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines.⁸⁹ In addition, the paper cites the uncertain environment on the Korean Peninsula, the situation in South Asia, and what it calls 'encroachments on China's sovereignty' in the South China Sea.⁹⁰ Thus a pattern of dualism in U.S.-China relations continued to be the part of their overall bilateral relations which involved constructive and cooperative engagement on the one side and contingency planning or hedging on the other side. In both these cases, India remained vigilant about each and every development in the U.S.-China relationship as the U.S. began to emerge an important factor in the Sino-Indian relations especially after 1998.

Bush Administration (2001-2008)

In the initial years of George W. Bush administration, the elements of competition in the U.S.-China relations were more prominent than the elements of cooperation. When George W. Bush became the President in 2001, his policy towards China was tougher than the policy of his predecessor, Bill Clinton.⁹¹ The Bush administration undertook an ABC (Anything But Clinton) approach to the U.S.-China relations that was opposed to all that Clinton advocated. Even during his electoral campaign, Bush made it clear that he would shift the U.S.-China relationship away from the strategic partnership advocated by Clinton. He did this by enacting a campaign that portrayed China as a strategic threat to the United States. For example, in a speech during the electoral campaign, Bush announced that, "China should be seen as a competitor, not as a partner and treated without ill but without illusions".⁹² Likewise, other would be key members of the new

administration were highly critical of China's role within the Asia-Pacific region. For example, Condoleeza Rice (who later became Secretary of State in Bush administration) wrote in 2000 in *Foreign Affairs* that, "China is not a status quo power but one that would like to alter Asia's balance of power in its own favor. That alone makes it a 'strategic competitor', not the 'strategic partner' the Clinton administration once called it".⁹³

Thus after becoming the President, Bush administration's approach towards China was less solicitous as compared to his predecessor. The new administration also reduced China's priority for U.S. policy-makers placing China well behind Japan, and even India and Russia. On the other side, China at that time needed peaceful international environment and cooperation from the U.S. for its growing economic development. Thus in order to alleviate the negative impact brought about by George W. Bush administration, the Chinese government adopted a series of active diplomatic initiatives. In February and March 2001, the former Chinese ambassador to the U.S. Li Daoyu and Vice Premier Qian Qichen visited the Washington to communicate with the U.S. officials that China wants to forge cooperative ties with the new administration.⁹⁴ With the rise of an unprecedented power and influence of the U.S. in Asia and beyond, China thought it to be in its best interests to seek common ground with Washington while ignoring differences for the time being. Chinese officials, thus, became more conciliatory and less hostile in dealing with the U.S. officials. With these positives moves from China's side, the U.S. also expressed its intention to pursue common ground in trade and other areas with China.⁹⁵ However, before this positive understanding between China and the U.S. could mature further, there occurred on 1 April 2001, Hainan Island Incident or EP-3 Incident in South China Sea.⁹⁶ The incident irked Beijing and alleged that that the U.S. plane which it termed as a "Spy Plane" was engaged in aggression against China. The situation was further complicated when President Bush said in an interview on 24 April 2001, that we would do our best to defend Taiwan against any external aggression. In this regard, the Bush administration increased Theater Missile Defense (TMD) system cooperation with Taiwan.⁹⁷ With these new developments, U.S.-China relations again became fraught with new tensions. On its part, there was frustration in China that "the U.S. sometimes seemed willing to cooperate with China and sometimes willing to cooperate - but only on terms repugnant to China".⁹⁸ On the U.S. side (especially among

conservatives), the notion of a "China threat" and the related view that China's rise would inevitably (or likely) bring conflicts with the United States had been gaining traction.⁹⁹

However, 11 September, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. twin towers popularly known as 9/11, dramatically altered the nature of U.S.-China relationship under the banner of being united by common threat of global terrorism. Though China was still considered by the Bush administration as a threat to the U.S., Washington found itself in a position in which it needed to secure strategic partners. The move towards strategic partnership, however, was not immediate. The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Report, issued in the aftermath of 9/11 made a non-explicit reference to China by stating that "a military competitor with formidable resources will emerge in the region".¹⁰⁰ The aftermath of the terrorist attacks, however, demonstrated that whilst the U.S. would still attempt to hedge against an increasing Chinese power, the two countries could unite on issues deemed strategically important by the U.S.

From China's perspective, the 9/11 incident provided a great strategic opportunity for Beijing to mend its relations with Washington in a more constructive way. Thus immediately after the terrorist attacks, China's President Jiang Zemin conveyed to his U.S. counterpart "deepest sympathy and solitude over the attacks" and stated that "the Chinese government has consistently condemned and rejected all forms of terrorist violence".¹⁰¹ Moreover, China adopted several diplomatic moves to convince the United States that Beijing supports fully the U.S. led war on terrorism. In this regard, China voted in support of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1368 authorizing the use of force against the Taliban, marking the first time that Beijing supported a U.S. led military intervention since the end of Cold War.¹⁰² China also used its leverage to influence Pakistan to cooperate fully with Washington on the war on terrorism. China's cooperation on the war on terror demonstrated the strongest U.S.-China strategic partnership since the election of Bush. That is why Colin Powell, the Secretary of State noted that whilst "a competitor, a potential regional rival" China must be seen as "a trading power willing to cooperate on areas where our strategic interests overlap".¹⁰³ According to the Final Report of the 9/11 Commission issued in July 2004, President Bush chaired a National Security Council meeting on the night of 11 September, 2001, in which he contended that

attacks provide a "great opportunity" to engage Russia and China.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, as the U.S. became involved in the war on terrorism, it seemed less inclined to view China as an actual or potential strategic competitor and instead hoped that in the post 9/11 world, all the great powers would be "united by common dangers..(and) increasingly..by common values".¹⁰⁵ Thus, the Bush administration's preoccupation with the war on terrorism forced it to trust China to increase its role in the region as a "responsible stakeholder". China has taken this role willingly, with China's President Hu Jintao stating that on issues of regional security, "China and the United States are not only both stake holders, they should also be constructive partners".¹⁰⁶

However, in spite of the upswing in the U.S.-China relations after 9/11, Chinese continued to harbor suspiciousness about U.S. motive in waging the war on terror. For example, the Deputy Director of the Chinese Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), Yuan Peng challenged the assertion of some U.S. experts that counter-terrorism cooperation between China and the United States would bring the two countries on same footing. In this regard, Yuan argued that cooperation over counter-terrorism:

Would hardly change (the United States) deep prejudice towards certain countries. Fundamental contradictions will re-emerge at the end of the counter-terrorist war..... And second, differences between China and the U.S. over a number of related important issues like definition of terrorism, the goal of current war, etc. have come to the surface despite good bilateral cooperation over counter-terrorism so far. Such divergences over concrete issues, plus existing problems between the two, must cast shadows over future ties.¹⁰⁷

Furthermore, the U.S.' enhanced presence in Asia in the post 9/11 years created new apprehensions among Chinese geostrategic community. For instance, in Central Asia the Americans were successful in gaining bases in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and also secured permission to fly over the territories of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kazakhstan. The U.S. also strengthened its alliance with Japan and expanded military cooperation with India. This increased U.S. military presence in China's "backyard" and improved relations with its neighbors created new apprehensions in China about U.S.

plans to encircle and ultimately contain it.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, China's initial optimism that Sino-U.S.-Pak triangular cooperation in the aftermath of 9/11 will wean Washington away from New Delhi did not materialize as the U.S. officials assured India that the United States' intensifying alliance with China or Pakistan would not come at India's expense.¹⁰⁹

Nevertheless, in spite of these new challenges which the U.S. policy posed towards China, Beijing continued moderation in its approach towards Washington. With these conciliatory gestures from China's side and greater U.S. interests in avoiding tensions with China at a time of its growing engagement with the war on terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan, Bush administration decided to enhance cooperation with China. This change in U.S. policy can be reflected from the President Bush's visit to Asia in 2002 when he visited China, Japan and South Korea. During his China visit, President Bush and his Chinese counterpart saw the potential for U.S.-China cooperation against global terrorism as an opportunity to craft a more productive and less hostile relationship over the short term.¹¹⁰ Moreover, in October 2002, there was a positive meeting between President Jiang Zemin and President Bush at the Crawford Texas in which both sides showed common interests in dealing with the problems such as nuclear proliferation, Iraq, Tibet and Taiwan which facilitated the positive Crawford Summit. During this Summit, President Jiang stated that:

We all agree that China and the U.S. are two great nations sharing extensive common interests. The two sides should increase exchanges and cooperation in economic, trade, cultural, and educational fields. We should step-up dialogue and coordination on major international and regional issues, and constantly move our constructive and cooperative relationship forward.¹¹¹

Thus it is observed that in the following years of 9/11 incident, the U.S.-China relationship has gained positive traction in spite of some differences over the same issue. The U.S. relations also improved with China's all-weather friend Pakistan which was accorded a major non-NATO ally status by Bush administration due to its crucial role in U.S.' anti-terrorism campaign in Afghanistan. On the other side, the U.S. reengagement with Pakistan and China have complicated Indo-U.S. relations in the short term and "have

introduced a wild card into the U.S. vision of India's future and of future U.S. and Indian priorities in Asia."¹¹² The Indian leadership was particularly disappointed that the U.S. opted for Pakistan's support for its campaign against Taliban, even though India has offered its operational support including the use of Indian military bases for the U.S. anti-terrorism campaign in Afghanistan. In this regard, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee conveyed to the U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell during his visit to India that Indians were hurt by the perceived unfairness of the U.S.¹¹³ To ward-off these Indian fears of China-Pakistan-U.S. nexus, the U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld assured India's leadership that the United States' renewed approach towards China and Pakistan would not in any way neglect India's interests.¹¹⁴ In the following years, India also realized that the U.S.-Pakistan cooperation on terrorism was the strategic necessity of the United States and therefore, cannot be compared to the Indo-U.S. relations which are based on the long term common commercial interests, security cooperation and democratic values.

On the other side, despite this period of stability in U.S.-China relations, suspicion and sensitivities over long standing bilateral issues continued to plague their bilateral relations. For instance, during this short period of stability in U.S.-China relations, Washington remained supportive of Taiwan's security and its quest for international recognition while China have remained firm about reunifying Taiwan under "One China Policy".¹¹⁵ Moreover, issues related to trade and economics began to increase noticeably during the late 2004. The U.S. complained to China for undervaluing its currency by maintaining an artificial "peg" to the U.S. dollar, a policy that undermines the competitiveness of the U.S. products and contributes to U.S. trade deficits.¹¹⁶ In 2005 alone, the U.S trade deficit with China increased to US\$ 201.6 billion. Moreover, issues related to human rights violations also remained a contentious issue between China and the United States. However, the most important U.S. concern about China was driven by security calculations especially Beijing's enhanced drive for military modernization program and increasing spending on defense expenditure. In this regard, in June 2005, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld questioned the motivations behind China's expanding military budget and stated that a congressionally mandated DoD Report in 2005 concluded that China is concealing its actual military expenditure to misled the

world community.¹¹⁷ The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) assessed that China has the "greatest potential" to compete with the U.S. Its "disruptive military technologies" could over time, offset U.S. military advantages. The 2006 QDR has reverted to a hard-line by making an unequivocal statement on China threat, suggesting that the U.S. should adopt a "hedging Strategy" vis-a-vis China.¹¹⁸ Similarly, the 2006 Annual Report of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) reiterated the concerns about the China threat. It disclosed that China is moving rapidly with an offensive capability by developing and deploying anti-ship missiles and maritime strike aircrafts capable of reaching U.S. naval bases in Pacific.¹¹⁹

However, amidst these fears expressed by the United States, China tried to convince Washington that it will not challenge the U.S. pre-eminence in Asia or elsewhere. In this regard an influential Chinese official reassured Washington that, "China is not pursuing a new version of Monroe Doctrine to oust the Americans and the argument that China is pushing U.S. out of Asia-Pacific region does not hold any ground".¹²⁰ However, while adopting a conciliatory attitude towards the U.S. to suit its present needs, China also showed its aversion and suspicions in the realm of strategic field. For instance, *People's Daily*, criticized the military establishment and right wing forces in the U.S. by accusing them of seeing a new U.S. world rival in China since the initiation of war on terrorism. It accused the 'White House' of hoping to advance its global hegemonic undertaking for which it needs China as a 'new adversary'.¹²¹ Particularly referring to the U.S.-India Joint Statement of 18 July, 2005, the Chinese media accused the U.S. of drawing India against China.

Despite these mutual fears neither side sought trouble with each other as both were preoccupied with other issues. For example, the Afghanistan and Iraq wars and issues related to Iran, North Korea, etc. have seriously undermined the U.S. economic development and complicated domestic issues. China's leaders on the other side remained entangled with internal economic and political problems such as growing fears of international financial crisis of 2008, growing unemployment and public disaffection with official corruption. In addition to it, the growing economic interdependence between the U.S. and China was another factor which compelled the two powers to continue the

positive equilibrium in their bilateral relationship. The bilateral trade between China and the U.S. since 2000 has steadily increased. For instance, in 2000, the total merchandise trade between China and the U.S. was US\$ 116.4 billion. By 2008, this figure had increased to US\$ 409.3 billion, with more than three-fold increase in eight years. The gradual rise of merchandise trade between the U.S. and China during the period 2000-2008 can be seen from Table 2.

Table 2
China-U.S. Bilateral Merchandise Trade, 2000-2008
(in billions of U.S. dollars)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Exports to China	16.3	19.2	22.1	28.4	34.7	41.8	55.2	65.2	71.5
Imports from China	100.1	102.3	125.2	152.4	196.7	243.5	287.8	321.5	337.8
Total Trade	116.4	121.5	147.3	180.8	231.4	285.3	343	386.7	409.3
Trade Balance	-83.8	-83.1	-103.1	-124.0	-162.0	-201.6	-232.5	-256.3	-266.3

Source: Wayne M. Morrison, *China-U.S. Trade Issues*, CRS Report for Congress, Washington, D.C., 23 June, 2009, p.2.

Whilst the growing economic interdependence was viewed as the "anchor and engine" for the cooperative U.S.-China relationship, the U.S. trade imbalance with China increased from US\$ 83.8 billion in 2000 to US\$ 266.3 billion which created occasional irritation between the two countries relating to trade issues. Moreover, in 2008, U.S. FDI in China was US\$ 15.7 billion, while China's FDI in the United States was US\$ 368 million.¹²² It was in this context that the nature of U.S. engagement with China at the concluding years of Bush administration seemed focused on sustaining the positive equilibrium which has begun to evolve during the second term of Bush administration.

From Indian perspective, though the relationship between China and the U.S. have improved a lot but there were still underlying contradictions between the two countries and especially the U.S. apprehensions about the growing ascent of Chinese power. On the contrary, there was no such contradiction in the relationship between India and the United States. Besides, both India and the U.S. shared identical concerns

regarding the increasing military and economic clout of China. It was in this backdrop that in 2005, the U.S. State Department announced that it will forge new strategic partnership with India and expressed its resolve, "to help India become a major world power in the 21st century".¹²³ In the following years, India and the U.S. negotiated a civil nuclear deal after changing the U.S. domestic regulations as well international law that eventually ended India's status as a nuclear pariah while recognizing it as a *de-facto* nuclear weapons state.¹²⁴ In this context, New Delhi did not express any major concern over the U.S.-China relations and at the same time was satisfied with the progress in its own relationship with Washington.

U.S.-China Relations under Obama Administration

The global strategic and economic landscape had been significantly changed when Barack Obama became the U.S. President in 2009. These changes, among other things, included the global financial crisis in 2008 and the rise of China and India as new power centers. Though the economic and financial crisis in 2008/2009 had seriously affected the U.S. economy, Asia was relatively stable and was not affected much by this global financial down-turn. The weaker financial situations in the U.S. and other parts of the world particularly Europe has given the perception of a shift of political and economic influence from West to East. In the backdrop of these new developments, Obama administration announced that it would enhance its engagement with Asia through the U.S.' "back in Asia" policy.¹²⁵ On China, President Obama announced that he would promote and upgrade the U.S.-China relations to new levels. In this regard, unlike the Bush administration, which has focused on a Strategic Economic Dialogue with China, the Obama administration has expanded it to a Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) which covered large areas including the security and strategic sectors.¹²⁶

Even during the presidential election campaign and the initial months of the Obama administration, there was a notable absence of substantial debate in the U.S. over China policy. This was in contrast to the last three transfers of the U.S. presidential power from one party to another. These changes in presidential power were accompanied by the contentious U.S. debates on China over human rights, trade practices, Taiwan policy (Bush to Clinton), and security threat posed to the U.S. and Taiwan in Asia by rising

Chinese economic, political, and especially military power (Clinton to Bush).¹²⁷ Moreover, the 2008 Democratic National Platform stated that Obama administration would encourage China to play a responsible role to help in addressing the common problems such as climate change, nuclear non-proliferation, energy security, issues relating to trade and currency and transparency in China's defense expenditure.¹²⁸ Thus after coming to power, President Obama signaled that it would forge cooperative relations with China which was positively reciprocated by the Chinese leadership. The new administration under Obama also urged Beijing to forge a durable military-to-military dialogue and strengthen the Strategic Security Dialogue (SSD), which brings together military and civilian leaders to discuss issues such as maritime security and cyber security. All these trends reflected that the Obama administration's perspective on China was more optimistic than pessimistic, which was later on confirmed by remarks of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, when she said:

Today's China is not the Soviet Union. We are not on the brink of new Cold War in Asia.....that requires adjustments in thinking and approaches on both sides. Geopolitics today cannot afford to be zero-sum game. A thriving China is good for America and a thriving America is good for China, so long as we both thrive in a way that contributes to the regional and global good.....we will only succeed in building a peaceful, prosperous Asia-Pacific if we succeed in an effective U.S.-China relationship.¹²⁹

Later in her visit to China in February 2009, Secretary Clinton reaffirmed Obama administration's commitment to expand the scope of bilateral discussions such as the Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED) and to identify areas of potential cooperation in economics, energy and climate.¹³⁰ Moreover, in his remarks in July 2009, Obama remarked that cooperative relations between China and the U.S. were a "prerequisite for progress on many of the most pressing global challenges".¹³¹

Thus, Obama administration's initial policy underlined the importance of building durable strategic cooperation with Beijing and questioned the prospects for an alliance with India. The emphasis was on offering strategic reassurances to Beijing by renouncing any effort to contain China, and facilitating Beijing's full integration into the global order. Although the administration itself did not use the term 'G-2', the concept gained traction

as a descriptor of Obama's initial policy towards China.¹³² India on the other hand, explicitly expressed its apprehensions about the potential consequences of a 'China First' U.S. policy in Asia and beyond.¹³³ New Delhi expressed its apprehensions on Washington's attempts to renew its cooperation with China in tackling the global problems such as nuclear proliferation, terrorism, global financial crisis, etc. India's fears were further exacerbated by the growing U.S.-China economic interdependence resulting from Chinese creditors holding large amounts of U.S. Treasury Bills and U.S. debtors providing the single largest market for Chinese manufactured goods.¹³⁴ Thus, any talk of an enhanced role for China in India's backyard was not a welcome development for India as it (New Delhi) claimed that Beijing has never shown any reciprocity to accommodate the genuine aspirations of India on many issues. Moreover, the prospect of the U.S. and India as natural allies and India as counter-weight to China under the Bush administration and India's enthusiasm for close U.S. alignment dimmed somewhat after Obama came into power believing that China and the U.S. could live and let live in Asia without stepping on each other's toes.

While the pace and intensity of Indo-U.S. strategic partnership slowed to some extent, the U.S.-China relations were gathering momentum towards close and cooperative relationship. In this context, President Obama and his Chinese counterpart Hu met on the sidelines of G-20 Financial Summit in London on 1 April 2009. The two leaders had an extensive exchange of views on U.S.-China relations and on global issues and thereby agreed to "work together to build a positive, cooperative and comprehensive U.S.-China relationship for the 21st century and to maintain and strengthen exchanges at all levels".¹³⁵ They also agreed to increase bilateral cooperation on a number of areas including economy and trade, counter-terrorism, law-enforcement, science and technology and non-proliferation. It was also decided by the two leaders "to maintain close communication and coordination and to work together for the settlement of conflicts and reduction of tensions that contribute to global and regional instability, including the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the Iranian nuclear issues, and the situation in South Asia".¹³⁶

The U.S.-China relations got further boost in November, 2009 when President Obama paid a visit to Beijing. During the visit, Hu and Obama held extensive talks regarding the important role of the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue and acknowledged that the Dialogue offers a unique forum to promote understanding, reduce differences, and develop solutions to common problems. The U.S.-China Joint Statement which was issued at the end of the meeting between the two Presidents highlighted the common interests between the U.S. and China, which stated among other things that, "the two countries are of the view that in the 21st century, both share increasing responsibilities on major issues concerning of global stability and prosperity. The two countries should further strengthen cooperation, work together to tackle challenges, and promote world peace, security and prosperity".¹³⁷ On Taiwan issue, the sides stressed that, "the Taiwan issue concerns China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and expressed the hope that the U.S. will honor its relevant commitments and support the Chinese side's position on this issue. The U.S. stated that it follows its 'One China Policy' and abides by the principles of three U.S.-China Joint Communiqués".¹³⁸ Moreover, so far as the South Asian region was concerned, the two leaders stated that, "they support the efforts of Afghanistan and Pakistan to fight terrorism, maintain domestic stability and achieve sustainable economic and social development, and support the improvement and growth of relations between India and Pakistan". The two sides stated that they are "ready to strengthen communication, dialogue, and cooperation on issues related to South Asia and work together to promote peace and development".¹³⁹ Thus, Obama's China visit was perceived as successful to a great extent in the sense that both countries shared commonality of views on various bilateral and global issues.

From India's perspective, the U.S.-China Joint Statement and thereby bestowing upon China a strategic role in maintaining peace and stability in South Asia with the U.S. backing was in contradiction of Bush's vision of India playing a counter-balancing role to China in the region.¹⁴⁰ The Obama administration's engagement with Beijing on global issues and new priorities with respect to the war in Afghanistan, served to elevate Pakistan and China respectively over India in United States' Asia policy. This strategic shift in emphasis led some Indian analysts to conclude that there was emerging a new type trilateral cooperative relationship between the United States, China and Pakistan.¹⁴¹

Moreover, from New Delhi's perspective, Washington's willingness to allow China to mediate between Indo-Pak issues was totally in contradiction to the Indian interests. It was because of the fact that China has always cultivated Pakistan as a strategic asset against India by boosting its nuclear and missile program. Moreover, India questioned the assertion that how China can act as an impartial broker on Indo-Pak issues when it (China) itself lays claim on India's territory in Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh.¹⁴² Similarly, the leftist parties in India also criticized the U.S.-China Joint Statement's clause relating to the disputes between India and Pakistan. In this regard, CPI-M (Communist Party of India-Marxist) leader Staram Yechury while interacting with media stated that, "there is absolutely no scope or need for any third party intervention in India's bilateral relations with Pakistan. The U.S. and China could decide whatever they wanted on their bilateral ties but it should not involve us. Indo-Pak relations are bilateral and there should be no third party interference".¹⁴³

Thus, it is observed that India was much disturbed over the U.S.' renewed cooperation with China and also to some extent with Pakistan. Nevertheless, to ease Indian fears about the growing U.S.-China relations, Washington moved quickly to assure India that the U.S.-Indian ties would not suffer at the cost of U.S.-China ties. In this regard, Under Secretary of State William Burns told an audience at the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace think tank that, "the U.S. desire for closer contact with China does not come at the expense of strong ties with India".¹⁴⁴ He added that "few relationships will matter more in the coming years than the one between the U.S. and India, and India's already large role in Asia will only grow".¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, ruling-out any U.S. mediation in the Indo-Pak peace process, he said "it is for India and Pakistan to decide on the 'scope, content, and pace' of the peace process".¹⁴⁶ Though India's apprehensions about the growing intimacy between China and the United States subsided to some extent with the reassurances from Washington that the U.S.-China relationship would not be built at the cost of India, New Delhi remained cautious and watchful of every new development in the U.S.-China relations.

However, it must be reiterated here that along with this positive trend of relations between China and U.S., the mutual suspicion and discord on various issues continued to

plague U.S.-China relations. These negative trends became more apparent in 2010 when the United States complained to China against its currency manipulation and industrial policy, its reluctance to condemn a series of North Korean provocations, and its ongoing human rights violations.¹⁴⁷ However, the most important concern expressed the U.S. was China's assertive behavior in the maritime dominion. For example, incidents that became the focus of media attention in the United States was China's assertive behavior in the South China Sea since 2008 and 2010 especially its recurring stand-off with the Philippines in the Scarborough Shoal and with Japan in the Diaoyu/Senkaku island.¹⁴⁸ For China, points of friction included U.S.' increased presence around Chinese periphery which included increasing Indo-U.S. military cooperation, arms sales to Taiwan, U.S. joint military exercises with South Korea in the Yellow Sea, U.S. declaration of a "national interest" in freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and Obama's meeting with Dalia Lama (Tibet's exiled spiritual leader).¹⁴⁹ To alleviate these negative trends amidst positive developments, President Hu conveyed to President Obama while attending the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, D.C., in April 2010 that "China and the United States should respect each other's core interests and major concerns. This is key to the healthy and stable development of bilateral ties."¹⁵⁰ Obama reciprocated to this positive gesture from the side of Chinese President by stressing that, "the strengthening of cooperation and the building of partnership between the two countries are not only in the interests of both countries, but also of the world."¹⁵¹ Thus it is observed that despite the substantial improvement in the U.S.-China relation in the initial years of Obama administration, mutual distress and discord on various issues (both bilateral as well as international) continued to be an important ingredient of their complex relationship.

It is due to this dual nature of the U.S.-China relationship that both countries continued to exchange highest level of political visits in spite of recurring tensions on various issues. In this context, President Hu Jintao's U.S. visit in January 2011 is worth mentioning. During the U.S. visit, Hu held extensive talks with his U.S. counterpart and both the leaders issued a Joint Statement on 19 January, 2011. The Joint Statement proclaimed their shared commitment to a positive and cooperative U.S.-China

relationship and touched a lot of issues such as Taiwan, human rights, economic and security cooperation and other regional and international issues.

- I. On strengthening U.S.-China relations, the two countries decided to continue working toward a partnership that advances common interests and affirmed the need to work together to address areas of disagreement. The United States reiterated that it welcomes a strong and prosperous China that plays a greater role in world affairs. China welcomes the United States as an Asia-Pacific nation that contributes to peace and stability in the region.
- II. On human rights, both states reiterated their commitment to "address differences on human rights in a spirit of mutual respect, and agreed to hold a next round of the U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue".
- III. On building a comprehensive and mutually beneficial economic partnership, the two leaders agreed to promote comprehensive economic cooperation, relying on existing mechanisms, by the third round of S&ED in May.
- IV. On addressing regional and global challenges, the two sides agreed to advance cooperation to counter violent extremism, prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, respond effectively to the challenge of climate change, counter piracy, address cyber security, fight transnational crime and other problems.
- V. The U.S. and China agreed on critical importance of maintaining peace and stability and denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula as underscored by the Joint Statement of 19 September, 2005 and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.
- VI. On the Iranian nuclear issue, the two countries reiterated their commitment to seeking a comprehensive and long term solution that would restore international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program.
- VII. The two sides also agreed to enhance communication and coordination in the Asia-Pacific region in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation.¹⁵²

The visit and the Joint Statement were praised both by the United States and China. For instance Senator John F. Kerry and other U.S. officials termed Hu's visit to Washington as "highly successful" and a major breakthrough in the relationship between the United States and China.¹⁵³ Moreover, as Washington welcomed a "strong, prosperous and successful China", the Obama administration demonstrated and conveyed to China that the U.S. does not seek as some fear in China, to prevent China's emergence as a major power or to contain it in any way.¹⁵⁴ On the other side, Beijing also termed Hu's U.S. visit as highly successful. The Chinese officials while recognizing that there are some difference between China and the United States on various issues, but at the same time sought to resolve these differences by building mutual trust and pursuing a win-win cooperation in a productive manner. So far as China's media was concerned, it termed the visit as a diplomatic "masterstroke" in U.S.-China relationship.¹⁵⁵

During Hu's visit to Washington in January 2011, India was concerned about the repetition of what had happened during President Obama's visit to Beijing in November 2009 when the Joint Statement issued stated that the U.S. and China are "ready to strengthen communication, dialogue, and cooperation on issues related to South Asia and work together to promote peace, stability, and development in that region". While Pakistan had welcomed the statement, India had resented any third party interference on the bilateral issue. At that time, New Delhi had asserted that it is "committed to resolving all outstanding issues with Pakistan through a peaceful bilateral dialogue".¹⁵⁶ It was due to this fact that the U.S.-China Joint Statement of 19 January, 2011 while reaffirming the commitment to the 2009 Joint Statement, does not refer to South Asia, or to India or Pakistan. The U.S., on the other side, intentionally dropped the idea of mentioning South Asia or India-Pakistan dialogue in the U.S.-China Joint Statement (January 2011) after a strong protest from India on an earlier occasion when such wordings were used in the U.S.-China Joint Statement of November 2009. It was also observed that "while U.S. wanted to step back from such language, this time keeping in mind India's concerns, the assessment was that China would have had Pakistan's interests in sight".¹⁵⁷ Moreover, reassuring New Delhi that the United States' relations with China will not in any way affect its relations with India, Obama's Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said on the eve of Hu's visit, "India enjoys a very personal relationship with the United States, and has

through the administrations of President Clinton, President Bush and now President Obama all taking important steps in visiting that country".¹⁵⁸ However, still from India's perspective the absence of a reference on South Asia in January 2011 Joint Statement did not necessarily reflect any significant change in the U.S. policy.¹⁵⁹

It can be observed from the preceding discussion that the United States and China seemed to build on what was deemed as an overall positive legacy from Bush administration. The exchange of visits by top level officials followed the pattern in the later years of the Bush administration in calling for deepening dialogue and development of "positive and constructive" relations. A positive atmosphere prevailed in the meetings between President Obama and President Hu during G-20 meeting in 2009 and the summit meetings during Obama's visit to China in November 2009 and Hu's visit to U.S. in January 2011. On the other side, India perceived that Obama administration's major aim in cultivating close relationship with Beijing was to get latter's support in tackling a range of global issues such as environmental problem, economic crisis, and security issues relating to Af-Pak stability, North Korean and Iranian nuclear issues. These new developments exacerbated Indian fears that Washington could lower its strategic partnership with New Delhi for the larger geostrategic interests with Beijing. In this context, the most negative development for India was the emergence of a U.S.-China G-2 framework in which China remains hostile to India and the United States is unviable as a balancing power. This development compelled New Delhi to cultivate close relations with other likeminded East Asian states (Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines, etc.) who share identical concerns with India about China's unpredictable behavior. For example, in October 2008, the Japanese and Indian Prime Ministers issued a "Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation" that among other things, initiated navy-to-navy talks, a regular defense policy dialogue, and bilateral and multilateral military exercises. A year later in 2009, common concerns about energy security, piracy, and sea lanes safety in the Indian Ocean Region led to the conclusion of an "Action Plan to Advance Security Cooperation".¹⁶⁰ The growing intimacy between New Delhi and Tokyo was to some extent in response to China's assertive behavior which can be reflected from the statement of a well known analyst when he said that, "diplomatic niceties apart, Japan and India are telegraphing a message to China, if you can throw a cordon around making

your presence in Pakistan's Gwadar port, erect listening posts in Bangladesh, Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia and South China Sea and work to politically limit India as a 'regional player' and use history to browbeat Japan, others too can play the game".¹⁶¹ India's tilt toward Japan and other Southeast Asian states was also aimed at to diversify New Delhi's strategic options in the backdrop of Washington's reconciliation with Beijing.

Predictably, India's inclination toward Japan was perceived in China as a larger conspiracy by these states to encircle and contain China. In this context, *People's Daily* (China's leading state controlled newspaper) while criticizing India, Japan and to some extent the United States wrote that, "it is absolutely not new for Japan and the U.S. to sit down and plot conspiracies together but it is intriguing to get India involved".¹⁶² Thus a pattern of dualism in U.S.-China relations continued as a central feature of the outwardly positive equilibrium. Constructive and cooperative engagement on the one hand and contingency planning or hedging on the other remained important features of the equilibrium. However, from India's perspective, the cooperative elements between China and the U.S. were becoming more apparent than the competitive elements which was thought to reduce India's strategic significance among the U.S. policy-making circles vis-a-vis China.

The U.S. Rebalancing towards Asia

The Obama administration during its first term has announced that the U.S. would enhance its engagement with Asia through the U.S. "back in Asia" policy.¹⁶³ At first, this new U.S. strategic shift towards Asia was called "Returning to Asia" and later dubbed as "Pivot" or "Rebalancing" to the East Asia and Pacific-Region. This new policy became one of the most important foreign policy initiatives of President Obama that reshaped the regional strategic landscape.¹⁶⁴ The basic conviction of the U.S. policy-makers that "the centre of gravity" is being shifting and realigning towards "Asia" was the basic rationale of the U.S. Pivot or Rebalancing strategy towards Asia-Pacific region.¹⁶⁵ In January 2012, the Department of Defense released its new strategic guidance report entitled, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st Century Defense". This important document stressed a steady and balanced shift in U.S. geographical priorities from Europe to Asia. It predicted that the United States' security and economic interests

are "intractably linked" to the developments in the arc extending from Western Pacific and East Asia into the Indian Ocean Region and South Asia, making it necessary to rebalance towards the area.¹⁶⁶ Likewise, this assertion was further confirmed by Hillary Clinton when she wrote in November 2011, in *Foreign Policy Magazine* that:

As the war in Iraq winds down and America begins to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, the U.S. stands at a pivot point. Over the last ten years, we have allocated immense resources to those two theaters. In the next ten years, we need to be smart and systematic about where we invest time and energy, so that we put ourselves in the best position to sustain our leadership, secure our interests and advance our values. One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade will therefore, be to look in a substantially increased investment - diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise in the Asia-Pacific region".¹⁶⁷

Broadly speaking, there were four major developments which led Washington to shift its strategic priorities towards Asia which are briefly stated below:

- I. The budding economic rise of Asia especially China and its importance to the U.S.' economic future.
- II. The U.S. decision to wind-up U.S.' military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- III. To reassure U.S. allies in Asia that the cut in U.S. defense spending would not in any way reduce Washington's presence in Asia.
- IV. The mounting growth of China's military power and its increasing assertiveness in the maritime areas with implications for freedom of navigation and the United States' ability to project power in the region.¹⁶⁸

In general terms, the shift includes a strong emphasis on South East Asia and South Asia to complement traditionally strong U.S. attention to North East Asia. According to McDevitt, this policy has six aims (as highlighted by the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton):

- I. Enhancing and deepening the American alliance system in the region.
- II. Strengthening U.S. relations with the important states of the region such as Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam.

- III. Engage more deeply with Asian multilateral institutions like ASEAN Defense Ministers meetings and East Asia Summit (EAS).
- IV. Increase trade and investment with the Asia-Pacific countries through the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).
- V. Enhance and establish broad based military presence in the region.
- VI. Promote legal and rules based behavior for the advancement of democracy and human rights and resolving all maritime disputes in the region through dialogue and consultation.¹⁶⁹

Thus the U.S. Rebalancing/Pivot strategy is a region wide multifaceted policy initiative aimed at addressing the challenges and opportunities brought by the rapid rise of China, sustaining the U.S. leadership in Asia and above all reassuring American allies in the region that the United States remains committed to their security. This new strategy towards Asia was promulgated by the Obama administration in the fall of 2011 and 2012.¹⁷⁰ Most of the Chinese strategic thinkers expressed the view that the new U.S. policy is directed against China but at the same time they believed that Washington would continue to maintain an engagement policy with Beijing and would not seek a direct confrontation with latter. In this regard, an eminent Chinese scholar Wu Xingtang asserted that the U.S.' "returning to Asia" was aimed at "encircling and blocking" *Weidu* China, but at the same time acknowledged that "areas of cooperation will continue to expand and deepen".¹⁷¹ So far as China's official stand was concerned, China's Vice-President Xi Jinping during a trip to Washington in February 2012 stated that, "China welcomes a constructive role by the U.S. in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific. At the same time, we hope the U.S. will respect the interests and concerns of China and other countries in this region".¹⁷² Similarly, in an annual report to China's Parliament delivered on 5 March, 2012, Premier Wen Jiabao stated that, "peace, development, and cooperation remain the underlying trends of the times, and overall the situation is favorable for China's peaceful development". Earlier in his 2011 report, he suggested that, "so far at least, China does not consider the announcement of rebalancing to Asia to have significantly eroded China's external environment".¹⁷³

It can be observed from these official statements that at the civilian official level, China's response to the U.S.' new policy of regional shift to Asia-Pacific was cautious and relatively moderate. However, it was the Chinese military leadership which adopted a very tough and critical stance on U.S. rebalancing strategy than the civilian leadership. For example, China's Defense Ministry spokesperson Senior Colonel Geng Yansheng said that "any moves to strengthen military alliances in the region reflect a 'Cold War mentality' and are 'detrimental to the mutual trust and cooperation between two countries in the region'".¹⁷⁴ Other developments related to rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific were covered by the official media of China like closer U.S. defense cooperation with China's rival claimants to maritime territory in South China Sea, particularly Vietnam and the Philippines, and other regional states like India and Singapore.¹⁷⁵ Thus, military and media commentary has expressed views that the rebalancing is intended to contain China.

When analyzed closely, it becomes clear that the U.S. rebalancing towards Asia is in essence a hedging strategy towards China. However, in February 2012 Obama stated that for the United States to buttress cooperative relationships in the region and enhance economic relations, and be a "strong and effective partner with the Asia Pacific region.....it is absolutely vital that we have strong relationship with China".¹⁷⁶ Moreover, to mitigate Chinese fears about the new strategy, Obama said he has "always emphasized that we welcome China's peaceful rise that we believe that a strong and prosperous China is one that can help to bring stability and prosperity to the region and to the world".¹⁷⁷ Likewise, Daniel R. Russel Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs in one of his Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee remarked that:

We view China's economic growth as complementary to the region's prosperity, and China's expanded role in the region can be complementary to the sustained U.S. strategic engagement in the Asia-Pacific. We and our partners in the region want China's rise to contribute to the stability and continued development of the region. As President Obama and Secretary Kerry have made very clear, we do not seek to contain China; to the contrary, we welcome the emergence of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous China.¹⁷⁸

Thus, Obama administration has repeatedly made it clear that "rebalance" to Asia is not a containment strategy but a policy aimed at strategically placing the U.S. in a

favorable position as the Asia-Pacific becomes one of the major centers of global activity.¹⁷⁹ Though it is true to some extent yet in actual practice the rebalancing have two pronged approach towards China: reaffirming and strengthening cooperative ties while simultaneously establishing a strong and credible U.S. presence across Asia to encourage constructive Chinese behavior and to provide confidence to the regional leaders (allies and potential partners like Japan and India) who wish to resist potential Chinese regional hegemony.

India's Responses

India naturally appeared in the new U.S. rebalancing policy towards Asia due to its geopolitical location and commendable military capabilities. Defense cooperation with India has been made a key component of the pivot strategy as explicated by President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. In defining the new American defense priorities following the political decision on the 'pivot to Asia', Pentagon declared that the U.S. is 'investing in a long term strategic partnership with India to support its ability to serve as a regional economic anchor and provider of security in the broader Indian Ocean region. Likewise, during his visit to New Delhi in June 2012, the U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta described India as the 'lynchpin' of U.S. military strategy in Asia.¹⁸⁰ On the other hand, India has been appreciative of the U.S.' pledge to help India to enhance its power position in the region. In this context, India has welcomed the U.S. rebalancing strategy and the new focus on Asia. However, in common with many of China's neighbors, New Delhi has been cautious to publicly embrace new initiative. For instance former ambassador to the United Nations, T.P. Sreenivasan, was quoted as saying, "We don't want to be identified with U.S. policy in Asia, even if we secretly like it".¹⁸¹ In broader terms, motivated by concerns about China's growing assertiveness and the U.S. readiness to support India's strategic capabilities, New Delhi perceived that the new U.S. strategy could compel Beijing to adopt a non-threatening approach toward India as China would be compelled to pay more attention towards East where the new U.S. military challenges could emerge. In the words of C. Raja Mohan, "the greater the U.S. pressure in the Pacific, the more likely that China would want to keep its South Western frontiers tranquil".¹⁸² Moreover, India's realizes that given the huge economic and military gap

between China and India,¹⁸³ New Delhi cannot merely rely on internal balancing to face powerful China. In this context, India favors the strategy in which the U.S. and its Asian allies must be central to any Indian strategy of external balancing. Nevertheless, India did not want to provoke or confront China directly in the light of widening Sino-Indian gap in defense capabilities and the border discord between the two countries. China is also India's largest trading partner and in this context an important country for its economic growth. Moreover, the concept of strategic autonomy in New Delhi's foreign policy has compelled India's policy-makers not to enter into any comprehensive strategic alliance with the United States despite U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta's description of India as a 'linchpin' of the rebalancing.¹⁸⁴

Thus while responding cautiously to the U.S. pivot, New Delhi has steadily expanded defense cooperation with the United States and deepened diplomatic engagement with the U.S. allies and other leading actors in Asia. At the same time, it has sought to reassure Beijing that India will not become a mere adjunct to the new rebalancing strategy towards Asia.¹⁸⁵ In this regard, India's Ambassador to the United States, Nirupama Rao, while speaking on U.S. rebalancing at Brown University in February 2013, stated that, "We welcome the U.S. engagement in Asia of the Indo-Pacific.....It is a space that impacts our destinies, whose security and prosperity is vital to both of us, and where we have an increasing convergence of interests."¹⁸⁶ At the same time, regarding China she said that, "Many observers are tempted to view the India-U.S. engagement in this region, as directed at China. I do not believe that such a construct is valid or sustainable, given the significant overlapping interests that bind us in the region and globally.....China is our largest neighbor."¹⁸⁷ However, this balanced policy of New Delhi is subject to change and its prospective stance depends on the evolution of the ground situation and progress in India's bilateral relations with the United States and China. Nevertheless, the continued Chinese assertiveness on the Sino-Indian border and the potential emergence of 'China-Centric Asia' could compell New Delhi to play a more prominent role in supporting the U.S. rebalance. For instance, recently Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made an implicit criticism on China's behavior in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions with his admonition about countries with "expansionist mindsets" that encroach on others' lands and seas.¹⁸⁸ Unlike his predecessor, Modi

government has shown willingness to express its support for freedom of navigation in the South China Sea in joint statements with the United States and other regional states. Moreover, for strengthening India's internal capabilities, Modi government is pursuing a time-bound program of building strategic infrastructure along the Sino-Indian border. In this regard more troops are being deployed with better weaponry and support technology.¹⁸⁹ According to Raja Mohan, "in the current situation India's policy is to focus on strengthening its own strategic capabilities, bridging its growing gap with China in collaboration with Washington, avoiding provoking Beijing, and rising its own independent profile in Asia".¹⁹⁰ Thus, while India supports the U.S. rebalancing strategy but at the same time, does not want to antagonize China. This new strategy adopted by the U.S. has provided India with great opportunities to enhance its external balancing along with its internal balancing. For India, these initiatives becomes necessary in the wake of growing power of her mighty neighbor, China.

Evolving Dynamics in the U.S.-China Relations

The evolving discourse in the U.S.-China relations revolves around the U.S. strategy of rebalancing towards Asia and China's counter-strategy to balance the U.S. actions that are perceived as a threat to her interests. After assuming the state presidency, Xi Jinping at the opening session of the 12th National People's Congress in March 2013 signaled a strong desire to strengthen the U.S.-China relations. During his visit to the U.S. on 7-8 June 2013, Xi Jinping pressed Obama for a commitment to a "New Type of Great Power Relationship"¹⁹¹ *xinxing doguo guanxi* that explicitly sought to avoid strategic rivalry or conflict between the United States and China.¹⁹² While defining the "New Type of Great Power Relations", Xi described it in three points: (a) non-conflict or confrontation, through emphasizing dialogue and treating each other's strategic intentions objectively; (b) mutual respect, including for each other's core interests and major concerns; (c) mutually beneficial cooperation, by abandoning the zero-sum-game mentality and advancing areas of mutual interest.¹⁹³ By proposing the "New type of Great Power Relations" between China and the U.S., Beijing believed that this might make it equal to Washington. Furthermore, from Chinese perspective, the new type of relationship enables the two powers to establish a new code of conduct in line with China's interests. Beijing

proposed this new type of relationship in the context that the two countries held identical concerns on various global issues which cannot be resolved without the willing and active participation of both these powers. In response, though the Obama administration has assured China that it welcomes a strong and prosperous China that plays a greater role in the world affairs, but at the same time has viewed this Chinese new concept with cynicism and suspicion. Moreover, the United States do not like the idea of another rival so quickly achieving strategic parity and influence with it.¹⁹⁴ In an article for *Foreign Affairs*, Elizabeth Economy and Adam Segal wrote that this kind of relationship between the U.S. and China "will raise expectations for a level of partnership that cannot be met and exacerbate the very real differences that still exist between Washington and Beijing".¹⁹⁵ However, the most important hurdle for the U.S. which holds it back from forging such type of relationship with China is the fear of upsetting the regional balance of power. The region's other middle powers would be unlikely to simply follow the joint dictates of China and the United States without being part of it.¹⁹⁶ So far as India is concerned, Washington's forging such a type of relations with Beijing raises questions about the reliability of the U.S. as a dependable partner against China. In this regard, India perceives that too much closeness between the Beijing and Washington will freeze New Delhi out and will be fatal to her interests. It would also eliminate one of Washington's rationales for a stronger relationship with India.¹⁹⁷ With such concerns from the allies and partners in the region, the U.S. did not show much enthusiasm for China's proposal of "New Type of Great Power Relationship" as expounded by China's President Xi Jinping. The U.S. is also reluctant to risk upsetting the regional security balance which currently favors Washington.

In addition to it, the elements of competition and tension in the U.S-China relations became more apparent in 2013 which overshadowed any prospects of forming the 'new model of ties' between the two powers. The major source of tension was the U.S. rebalancing towards Asia and China's counter-balancing to U.S. actions under the new administration of Xi Jinping. Two years before the U.S. has announced its rebalancing towards Asia-Pacific. At that time, the strategy was put into practice with two aims - engagement and containment. However, after two years, from China's perspective the elements of containment became more apparent than the elements of engagement with

the enhanced U.S. military presence in Philippines, Australia, and Singapore.¹⁹⁸ The United States has also enhanced and strengthened its "Air-Sea Battle"¹⁹⁹ strategy which is aimed to face any future conflict with China. Moreover, Washington is trying to rewrite the rules of globalization by concluding mega-regional pacts such as the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP). These pacts are actually aimed to reduce China's economic influence in the region. Beijing has viewed all these activities as the U.S. strategy to contain China and to embolden its rivals in territorial disputes with China.²⁰⁰ However, it must be reiterated here, that despite these frictions between the U.S. and China on political issues, the economic relations continued to flourish between the two states. The gradual rise of U.S.-China bilateral merchandise trade from 2009 to 2014 can be seen from Table 3.

Table 3
China-U.S. Bilateral Merchandise Trade, 2009-2014
(In billions of U.S. dollars)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Exports to China	69.6.	91.9	103.9	110.6	121.7	124.0
Imports from China	296.4	364.9	393.3	425.6	440.4	466.7
Total Trade	366	456.8	497.2	536.2	562.1	590.7
Trade Balance	-226.8	-273.1	-295.5	-315.0	-318.4	-342.3

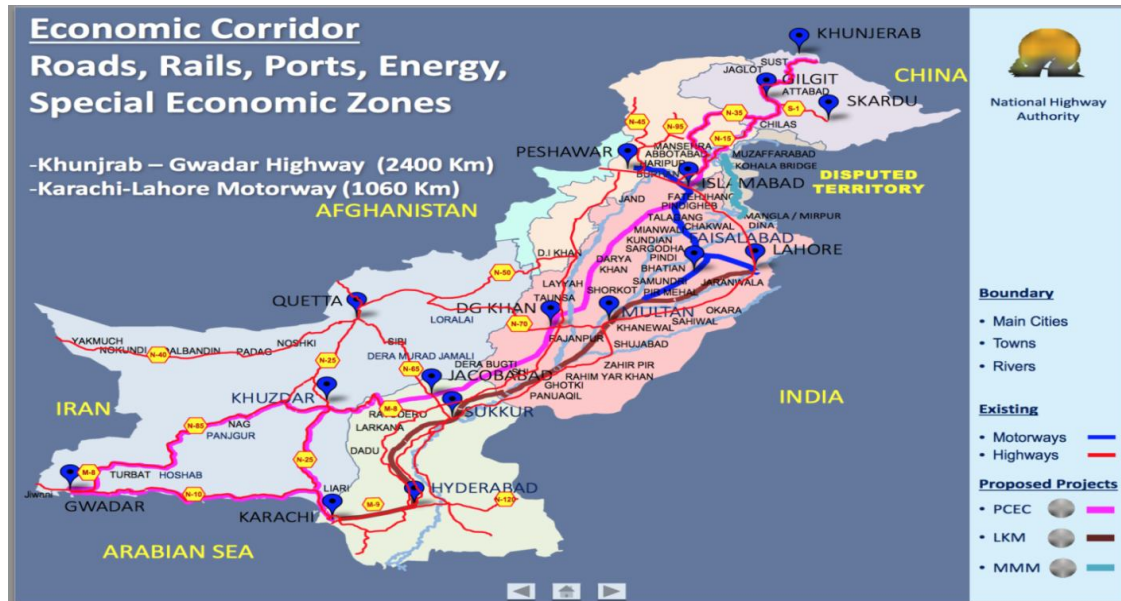
Source: Wayne M. Morrison, *China-U.S. Trade Issues*, CRS Report for Congress, Washington, D.C., 17 March, 2015, p.3.

Thus as shown in the above Table, the total trade flows between China and the U.S. increased from US\$ 366 billion in 2009 to US\$ 590.7 billion in 2014. However, in spite of their flourishing bilateral trade, the issues related to it have not subsided. In this regard, the major U.S. concerns include U.S. trade deficit with China, intellectual property rights, and industrial policy and investment. China, on the other hand, has demanded fair business and investment opportunities in American and world markets.²⁰¹ Moreover, the political issues continued to cast negative impact on U.S.-China relations. China's concerns mainly emanated from the U.S. rebalancing strategy which led China to initiate her own counter-balancing strategy.

China's Dual Responses to U.S. Rebalancing

In response to the U.S. rebalancing strategy, China has adopted a dual approach as well. Beijing demonstrates that it will firmly respond to containment strategy and at the same time welcomes an engagement strategy. China has demonstrated the potential benefits of cooperation by proposing economic initiatives, namely: (a) the One Belt One Road (OBOR) strategy or Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), comprising of the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and the 21st century Maritime Silk Road (MSR); (b) the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB); (c) the revival of the Free Trade of Asia and the Pacific (FTAAP) initiative, and (d) the intensification of bilateral partnerships with its neighbors.²⁰² In South Asia, China initiated the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as part of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Route and New Silk Road to firm up its connectivity to Asia, Africa and Europe through port networks and roads.²⁰³ In September 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping initiated the plan for SREB during a visit to Kazakhstan. A month later, he proposed the Building of the MSR and the establishment of the AIIB during a visit to Indonesia. A month later, he pledged to set up the US\$ 40 billion Silk Road Fund. Subsequently, in March 2014, the OBOR Action Plan was unveiled. The Plan highlights the goal of linking infrastructure and trade between two continents (Asia and Europe). In November 2014, in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit hosted by China, a road map for reviving the FTAAP was agreed.²⁰⁴ President Xi called it the "aggregation" of existing free trade agreements including the TPP and the ASEAN led Regional Comprehensive and Economic Partnership (RCEP). Moreover, in April 2015, Xi upon his visit to Pakistan announced that China's would invest US\$ 46 billion in Pakistan towards the realization of CPEC. The CPEC is considered an important project that aims to consolidate strategic ties between China and Pakistan. The corridor will run through India's periphery notably in the Pakistani administrated Kashmir in the areas of Gilgit-Baltistan which is in dispute with India²⁰⁵ as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2
China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)



Source: <http://dailymessenger.com.pk/2015/11/13/opposition-leader-see-punjab-specific-china-pakistan-economic-corridor/>

In general, the OBOR may also be seen as China's response to the more exclusive mega-economic blocks in the making, the TPP in Asia and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP), both of which are led by the United States.²⁰⁶ Thus, China's OBOR represents an alternative and supposedly more inclusive economic architecture competing with those projects and strategies which have been initiated by the U.S.

Though India decided to become a founding member of the China-led AIIB, but has shown reluctance to be part of China's Maritime Silk Road Initiative.²⁰⁷ New Delhi perceived these initiatives especially the CPEC as Beijing's attempt to advance its expansionist agenda in the wider Indo-Pacific region and a strategic encirclement of India in South Asia. New Delhi has also opposed this corridor as it will pass through disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.²⁰⁸ In this regard, Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj while criticizing the CPEC said that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi "very strongly" raised the issue regarding CPEC during his recent visit to Beijing, and termed the project "unacceptable" going through PoK (Pakistan-occupied

Kashmir).²⁰⁹ However, rejecting these Indian concerns, China's Admiral Guanyoufei said the CPEC project being built under OBOR planning would benefit all the regional countries including India.²¹⁰ Likewise, Deputy Director General of the Asian Affairs at the Foreign Ministry Huang Xilian said that China holds CPEC project through Gilgit Baltistan in high esteem.²¹¹ With this move, China has signaled that it does not take India's claim on Pakistan-administered Kashmir seriously which is in contravention to its earlier stand of being neutral on Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan. From Pakistan's side, Sartaj Aziz (Pakistan's National Security Advisor) said he was surprised by Sushma's remarks on CPEC. He made it clear that this project is meant for regional connectivity, economic development and prosperity of the people of the entire region.²¹²

Moreover, China has also intensified new strategic partnerships with its neighbors. For instance, in April 2012, China and Thailand agreed to upgrade their bilateral relationship to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership." In October, 2013 China upgraded its diplomatic ties with both Indonesia and Malaysia to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership". In July 2014, it vowed to upgrade its existing "Strategic Cooperative Partnership" with ASEAN and also enhanced its ties with Australia and Vietnam to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" and "Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership" respectively.²¹³

Though China demonstrates the potential benefits of cooperation by proposing commercial agreements and a "Silk Road Economic Belt", but at the same time, the establishment of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) indicates that China will not tolerate provocations in disputed territories. In November 2013, China's Ministry of Defense declared an ADIZ over a portion of the East China Sea. The New East China Sea ADIZ is the boldest of China's recent attempts to demonstrate control and sovereignty over disputed areas in the East China.²¹⁴ China claims that the ADIZ is necessary to protect its state sovereignty and territorial and air space security in the ECS. China's declaration to establish ADIZ over disputed territory in the ECS has given rise to apprehensions about China's intentions and its larger implications for the region. Japan and South Korea are the main regional states who have expressed their apprehension over China's ADIZ declaration.²¹⁵ The U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel while criticizing Chinese move said that, "it could add tensions, misunderstandings, and could

eventually lead to dangerous conflicts".²¹⁶ Though it remains to be seen how strictly China enforces this unilateral law, Beijing has already increased its assertive behavior in the South China and the East China Seas.²¹⁷

New Delhi's response to China's announcement of an ADIZ in the East China Sea was cautious as India's External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid said that "any issue must be resolved between concerned parties through dialogue" which he termed as India's "standard position" on this issue.²¹⁸ Lalit Mansingh (former Foreign Secretary) while speaking about the rationale behind the "standard position" noted that, "India has its own set of problems with China. It is better not to take positions on other countries' problem with China".²¹⁹ However, one of the premier New Delhi based think tanks Observer Research Foundation in one of its study titled, "China Aggression is a Global Threat" asserted that, "This (ADIZ) portends trouble for India. Today if China declares an ADIZ in the east, what prevents it from declaring the same over Arunchal, Sikkim or Ladakh?". The study also suggested that "India must urgently explore a variety of options to restore deterrence vis-à-vis China by enhancing its economic clout, developing its air force and forging a close alignment with Japan".²²⁰ However, Admiral D. K. Joshi (India's Navy Chief) did not attach much importance to China's declaration ADIZ by saying it "hasn't bothered the Navy much".²²¹ Nevertheless, what have bothered India are China's rapid strides in military capability and its increasing presence in the Indian Ocean region including port visits to Sri Lanka by its nuclear submarines and recently conventional submarine to Pakistan. Moreover, Chinese PLA Navy warships have been spotted on long deployments just off India's coasts. China is also reportedly seeking bases in the Indian Ocean region, with Djibouti as a possible host for the first such base.²²² Although China has reiterated that it recognizes India's special role in stabilizing the strategic Indian Ocean region but did not accept the region as "India's backyard".²²³ These threatening strategic maneuvers adopted by China in the Indian Ocean have compelled New Delhi to forge close strategic relations with other likeminded countries who share the same concern vis-a-vis China. In this regard, India has been considering of joining the Japanese proposed "democratic Security Diamond," which would include Australia, India, Japan and the United States to counter the alleged threat posed by China in their respective maritime dominions.²²⁴ Moreover, Modi government has also

expanded its presence along China's periphery by intensifying its relations with Japan, South Korea, Mongolia and Vietnam. To counter China's presence along the Indian maritime regions especially in Gwadar port in Pakistan which is perceived as becoming a potential China's naval hub, India is building a port in Iran's Chabahar to gain access to Afghanistan. New Delhi has also intensified its maritime cooperation with the U.S. which includes the Malabar Naval Exercises and the construction of India's largest warship, the 65,000-ton aircraft carrier INS Vishal.²²⁵

Thus China is pursuing two pronged strategy - economic engagement and increasing assertiveness in maritime dominion to counter the U.S. rebalancing strategy. Beijing has demonstrated that it is capable of using its geography and its economic clout in accelerating interconnectivity and is prepared to face any future conflict with the United States. China's initiatives also indicate that it does not want to be left out, but rather is needed in order to assemble a "grand synthesis of economic and cultural corridors."²²⁶ The U.S. response to all these new Chinese initiatives was in the form of what Obama said, "China wants to write the rules for world's fastest growing region. That would put our workers and our business at a disadvantage. Why should we let that happen? We should write that rules".²²⁷ It is also observed that the dual character of the U.S. rebalancing strategy towards Asia on the one hand and China's dual response to this U.S. strategy on the other hand, demonstrates a deep ideological and programmatic division between the two countries. In consonance with its size and increasing status, Beijing wants a sphere of influence of its own while Washington is not prepared to accede it. In this context, there is very least chances that this strategic competition between the United States and China can be eliminated with few concessions. Even the resolution of bilateral issues between Beijing and Washington such as Taiwan issue, human rights issues, and issues related to cyber crime, etc. will not solve this basic dispute over influence in the region. The increasing bilateral trade and other ties create reasons to avoid war, but they have not solved the security problems that can independently drag the two countries into conflict. In both the situations that is U.S.-China conflict or U.S.-China G-2 type of relationship, New Delhi would find itself at the receiving-end. Thus, the current competitive-cum-cooperative relationship between the

U.S. and China is in the best interests of India which provides some strategic maneuverability to the Indian policy-makers in dealing with China and the U.S.

Conclusion

After comprehensive and detailed analysis of U.S.-China relationship in the post-Cold War period, it is observed that the relationship between these two powers cannot be described in simple terms as friend or foe. The elements of competition and cooperation co-exist side by side which has led many Sino-U.S. experts to describe their relationship as 'cooptation' and 'congame'. Although, India's relations with both these powers have improved a lot in the recent years and especially its growing strategic partnership with the United States, it remains watchful of the U.S.-China relationship in view of its oscillating nature. During the Clinton administration, the U.S.-China relations (barring the Taiwan Strait face off 1995-96) were generally normal and the U.S. President Bill Clinton even described China as 'strategic partner'. There was also a brief U.S.-China alignment against India after the latter's nuclear tests in May, 1998. This evolving U.S.-China relationship towards cooperative framework was reversed by Bush administration which termed China as 'strategic competitor'. The Bush administration also intensified its strategic relations with India which began to evolve towards Indo-U.S. alignment to balance the rising power of China in the region. However, after the 9/11 incident, the U.S.-China cooperation on terrorism, nuclear non-proliferation, stalemate on the Korean Peninsula and the growing economic interdependence between China and the United States has led to some vacillation along the competitor-partner spectrum in Bush's China policy. The Obama administration was inclined to forge positive relations with China which led many observers to assert that U.S.-China relations were evolving towards the 'G-2' power relationship. These new developments exacerbated Indian fears that Washington could lower its strategic partnership with New Delhi for the larger geostrategic interests with Beijing. In this context, the most negative development for India was the emergence of a U.S.-China G-2 framework in which China remains hostile to India and the United States is unviable as a balancing power. However, with the United States' new rebalancing strategy towards Asia and China's counter-strategy to the U.S. rebalancing, the prospect for the emergence of G-2 framework between the rising

and the established power has diminished to some extent. In recent years security competition in the maritime domain and friction over other issues like cyber espionage, issues related to trade imbalances, etc. has become more acute than cooperation on environment, terrorism or nuclear non-proliferation. On the other hand, China's assertive behavior on the Sino-Indian border, encroachments in the Indian Ocean region by PLA Navy, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, etc. has led India's new government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi to diversify its strategic options. It has cultivated more close relations with the United States, Japan, Australia, South Korea, Mongolia, Vietnam, and other likeminded countries who are weary at China's unpredictable behavior. India has also sought the increased U.S. cooperation in the defense sector including technology transfer, joint production and research, joint military exercises etc. to strengthen its internal defense capabilities. However, in spite of this, India remains uncertain about the roller-coaster nature of U.S.-China relations. It is because of the fact, U.S.-China trade is more than Indo-U.S. trade and on some global issues like environment, trade, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, etc. the U.S. needs China's support and backing more than it does of India. In such a situation, while India needs the U.S. support on some issues related to security, it has not deviated from its cherished policy of maintaining strategic autonomy in its foreign policy. Moreover, though the new government under Narendra Modi has demonstrated an inclination towards forging close relations with the United States, it also continues to cultivate good neighborly relations with China. The future course of India's policy vis-a-vis China and the U.S. depends on how Sino-Indian relations evolve and how the United States treats China (partner or competitor).

Notes

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Chapter-IV

Indo-U.S. Strategic Convergence and China's Predicament

Introduction

The relationship between India and the United States have witnessed positive and upward trajectory in the post-Cold War period and especially since 2000. During most of the Cold War period, security perceptions between the two countries were so conflicting that they could not collaborate on these issues. There was hardly any economic cooperation and political consensus between the U.S. and India on various international issues that could bind them together.¹ It is due to this fact that the relationship between the U.S. and India was often characterized by the phrases such as 'estrangement', 'antagonism', 'failure', 'confrontation', 'interventionism' and 'enmity'.² Sometimes, the Indo-U.S. relationship was also described as 'amissed partnership', the 'unfriendly partners', the 'dialogue of deaf', the 'old peace', and the 'politics of encounter'.³ However, with the end of the Cold War, all reasons of estrangement vanished and it took a very short time to bring the bilateral relations between India and the U.S. to the extent of strategic partnership. This strategic partnership is comprised of a broad range of areas for mutual cooperation which includes economic, trade, space, nuclear and missile technology, and defense cooperation.⁴ This emerging 'strategic partnership' between the U.S. and India is also based on a shared respect for democracy and concern about the threat of global terrorism, proliferation of nuclear weapons, security of sea lane communications, and above all mutual unease about the long term implications of the rise of China.⁵

From the U.S perspective, India is widely seen as evolving towards a great power status and thereby has a tremendous potential for global influence. The growing significance of India in the global power structure is attributed to its growing economy, robust democracy, strong military base and its geostrategic position between the sea lanes connecting two volatile regions of vital interest to the U.S. - the Middle East and East Asia. Condoleeza Rice (the former U.S. Secretary of State) remarks testifies this fact when she said during her India visit in 2005 that, "India is emerging not just as regional

power but as a global power. The relationship with India has been transformed in recent years from one that had great potential into one that is really now realizing that potential. With India, we clearly have a broader and deep relationship than we have ever had".⁶ Similarly, the U.S. 'National Security Strategy Report' of May 2010 recommended that the strong bilateral relations with India is in the best interests of the United States as the U.S.' and India's interests on a wide range of areas often converge. The Report noted that:

The United States has undertaken a transformation in its bilateral relationship with India based on a conviction that U.S. interests require a strong relationship with India. We are the two largest democracies, committed to a political freedom protected by representative governments. India is moving toward greater economic freedom as well. We have a common interest in the free flow of commerce, including through the vital sea lanes of Indian Ocean. Finally, we share an interest in fighting terrorism and in creating a strategically stable South Asia.⁷

Furthermore, the 2011 'Pentagon Report' which is mostly concerned with the strategic and defense affairs also observed that strong relations with India are in the best interests of the United States and for India and described the two countries as "natural partners". The Report further noted:

Both are destined to be closer because of shared interests and values and our mutual desire for a secure and stable world. A bilateral partnership is in the U.S. interests and benefits both countries. We expect India's importance to U.S. interests to grow in the long run as India, a major regional and emerging global power, increasingly assumes roles commensurate with its position as a stakeholder and a leader in the international system.⁸

These statements clearly reflect that the relationship between India and the U.S. are at an all time high with the two countries enjoying unprecedented levels of cooperation in the political, economic, diplomatic and strategic affairs. As former U.S. President George W. Bush put it, "India and the United States are separated by half a globe. Yet today our two nations are closer than ever before" and as Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns predicted that "within a generation many Americans may view India as one of our two or three most important strategic partners".⁹

From India's perspective, the transformation of her relations with the United States has been the most significant feature of its foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. Confirming India's views on its partnership with the United States for achieving its strategic and national development goals, India's Ambassador to the U.S. Meera Shanker said that partnership with the U.S. is important to achieve its national developmental goals and argued that the transformation of the Indo-U.S. relations has been the most significant feature of India's foreign policy since the last two decades.¹⁰ She further added, "We have nearly 30 forums of bilateral engagement, spanning virtually all aspects of human endeavor. Our political dialogue has grown to an unprecedented level, our strategic understanding has deepened and encompasses both our region and the world and our bilateral cooperation has entered new frontiers".¹¹ Likewise, Ronen Sen (also one of the India's Ambassadors to the U.S.) while commenting on the deepening relationship between India and the U.S. said, "the relationship has been qualitatively transformed into what can be truly called a 'strategic partnership'. By 'strategic' I mean it is not based on any transient considerations, but on long term national interests of both countries converging".¹²

Back in 14 September 2000, India's Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee while addressing to the Joint Sessions of the U.S. Congress, remarked:

As we talk with candor, we open the doors to new possibilities and new areas of cooperation in advancing democracy, in combating terrorism, in energy and environment, science and technology and in international peace keeping. And we are discovering that our shared values and common interests are leading us to seek natural partnership of shared endeavors.¹³

Thus it is observed that the strategic interests between the United States and India have been significantly converging since the end of the Cold War. This convergence of strategic interests between the U.S. and India is based on the shared values and concerns such as promotion of democratic values as both are the oldest and largest democracies respectively, fighting global terrorism as both are facing a considerable threat from this menace, economic cooperation and trade interests, and defense cooperation to face new and emerging threats to the regional and global peace. However, there is a speculation

among strategic community that whether or not China has been a factor in the emerging strategic relationship between the U.S. and India. In this regard, though the officials from both the sides deny such an assertion, both the states are concerned about the future role of China on the regional and global scene given its unprecedented rise since the last two decades. Although, India's relations with China has improved a lot since the end of the Cold War, both sides harbor deep suspicion of each other's strategic intentions and it is likely that such mistrust will continue so far as their territorial discord remains unresolved and as each side encroaches into the others sphere of influence.¹⁴ Similarly, Americans are also equally concerned about China's unpredictable behavior. For instance, the 'Quadrennial Defense Review' (QDR) published recently by the Pentagon identifies China as the only potential long term military threat to the United States.¹⁵ Thus, while overtly India and the U.S. are negating the assertion that their evolving strategic convergence is directed against or aimed at containing the rise of China, there is concern in both the countries about the unpredictable behavior of China in the long run. While commenting on these concerns, a renowned Indian diplomat noted, "Given their different histories and distant geographies, India's and the U.S.' geo-strategic interests can never completely converge. Yet, there is consonance in their concern about the consequences of the rise of China. China and the United States have adversarial relations with each other. So do China and India".¹⁶

In the above context, the upward trajectory of strategic partnership between the U.S. and India has major implications for China and its relations with the two countries. It is due to the fact that in China's threat perception, a growing Indo-U.S. strategic partnership carries with it the potential for Indo-U.S. containment of China. Even it is observed among some Chinese strategists that they do not fear as much about the U.S. presence in Asia as they are worried about the strategic rise of India backed by the United States.¹⁷ These Chinese fears and concerns about the growing Indo-U.S. strategic convergence can be reflected from various articles written by various experts in leading Chinese newspapers. For example, Prof. Yang Yunzhong wrote in *China Daily* on 25 June, 2001 that:

The rapid development of U.S.-India relations will exert profound influence on the political and security environment of the Asia-Pacific region and the world. During the Cold War, the U.S. and India were antagonists. But the U.S. has adjusted that relationship and made friends with India. The U.S. now views India as a leading player in South Asian affairs and a rising world power, not just a source of regional problems. Both economically and militarily, India is gathering momentum and this provides the U.S. more diplomatic and strategic angles to play in the region. Among the benefits for the U.S. is the fostering of an anti-China stronghold, South West of China.¹⁸

Likewise, *Liberation Army Daily*, an official newspaper of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in one of its article titled, "Behind the Warming of India-U.S. Military Relations" (22 August 2001), stated that:

Analysts point out that U.S.' joining hands with India have come out of consideration of its long term South Asia strategy. First, the South Asia Region, with Central Asia to its north, Middle East to its west, and dominating the Indian Ocean to the south, indeed occupies an important geostrategic position. U.S. establishment of close military relations with India will help U.S. armed forces conduct exercises and training in Indian Ocean. This will improve operational capabilities of the U.S. forces in the region, widen American influence, and obtain important strategic advantages.¹⁹

After examining these article excerpts from China's state controlled media, it becomes clear that China is much concerned about the growing Indo-U.S. strategic relations. In this regard, China's fears and concerns have been beautifully summarized by an Indian geostrategic expert Brahma Chellaney by recounting that, "On my visit to China, I have found as an Indian that the only time the Chinese sit-up and listen is when the U.S.-Indian relationship comes up. India and the U.S. ganging up militarily is China's worst nightmare".²⁰ It is within these contextual frameworks that this chapter attempts to examine and analyze the factors and motivations behind the growing Indo-U.S. strategic partnership especially in the post-Cold War period. Moreover, in the light of this positive ascent in Indo-U.S. relations, it is also analyzed how it affects the interests and security perceptions of the third important actor - China and thereby what has been or what are

China's responses in this regard? These are the perennial questions which would be discussed at length in the following pages of this chapter.

Indo-U.S. Relations in the Post Cold War Era

The international alliance structure of the Cold War era got radically transformed with the disintegration of Soviet Union. All the major, middle and small powers had to readjust their foreign policies to cope with the new emerging challenges of international politics. In case of India, the Soviet military and diplomatic support which it enjoyed throughout much of the Cold War years was no more there. The successor state of the Soviet Union now Russia was not in a position to compete with the same pace and intensity as it used to be in the Cold War years with her Super Power rival, the United States. This important development compelled New Delhi to seek other options and possibilities to protect and secure its interests in the new emerging dynamics of power politics. The major step in this regard which India adopted was to reduce its opposition to the U.S.' strategic, economic and diplomatic policies and demonstrated a new openness to the pursuit of mutually beneficial endeavors. India fully realized the need of strategic imperative that intimate liaison with the U.S. could help her to fulfill the vacuum left by the Soviet Union's collapse and also balance against rising Chinese power.²¹ Broadly speaking, the following factors prompted India's leaders to enhance its relationship with the United States in the post-Cold War period.

- I. Since its independence, the successive Indian leaders have always cherished the goal of making India as one of the world powers. However, after losing its super power ally (the Soviet Union), India's influence and role was abbreviated to a great extent in the international sphere. Moreover, in the emerging unipolar world order, India sought to get a favorable place in accordance with her size and strength. With this aim at sight, India thought it in its best interests to develop close relations with the U.S. to achieve its target great power status.
- II. The liberalization processes and the subsequent economic reforms which India initiated in the early 90s required a lot of capital, technology and market, and the

U.S was the main source of what India needed. India hoped to strengthen economic relations with the United States to achieve its economic take off.

- III. It is also observed that in the post-Cold War period, the interests of India and the United States begin to converge with each other. For example, both of them were concerned with the issues of international terrorism, religious extremism, drug trafficking, maritime security, and above all the common concerns about future role of China with which both had remained on confrontationist mood during much of the Cold War years.²²

Thus in the post-Cold War period, India had adopted new tendencies in relations with other countries. India had prompt inclination towards the United States and moved swiftly to transform its relations with America in a partnership. New Delhi was aware of the fact that the cooperative relationship with the U.S would carry support in political, military and economic terms and would build a suitable environment for the enhancement of India's influence in the region.

The U.S. on the other hand, began to cultivate Indo-U.S. relations on their own merit as the U.S. policy-makers no longer looked at India in the light of the latter's friendship with the Soviet Union which was a major stumbling block in the Indo-U.S. relations.²³ Moreover, India was now regarded as a regional power centre. Most of the U.S. experts recommended an Indo-centric policy in South Asia by emphasizing that being a dominant power in the region, India could play an important role to deal with the future challenges. India's defense potentials particularly its navy was perceived important to meet the U.S. interests in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. India's overall military strength was also valued as a countervailing power against China.²⁴ In addition to it, the following factors prompted the U.S. government to form a cooperative relationship with India:

- I. The foundation of India's defense and foreign policy was radically altered and shattered to a great extent with lose of her Cold War ally, the Soviet Union. In the U.S. perceptions, New Delhi could no longer use Moscow as a counterweight to

Washington. This important strategic development played an important role in bringing Americans closer to Indians.

- II. After the withdrawal of Soviet military from Afghanistan in late 80s, Pakistan's strategic importance to the U.S. had greatly declined. India as a dominant power in the region, became more important to the U.S. for maintaining regional peace and stability.
- III. In terms of shared values, the U.S. had close affinity with India as both were oldest and largest democracies respectively.
- IV. The U.S.' attraction towards India was also driven by her economic interests. The economic liberalization process and subsequently the economic reforms initiated by India in the early 90s created tremendous economic opportunities for the United States. Washington considered India a huge potential market for the U.S. goods, capital, and technology.²⁵
- V. The China factor also drove the U.S. closer to India. China's increasing strategic presence in the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) was considered by the U.S. strategists as a big threat to the American predominance in the region. In this regard, the U.S. wanted to deepen strategic ties with India and supporting it as a counter-weight to China.²⁶

In the light of this analysis, it can be asserted that the massive structural changes that resulted from the end of Cold War foreclosed India's old Soviet-centric strategic policies and drove it closer to the United States. These changes also compelled the United States to adopt a new and cooperative policies toward India. As a result of these new and emerging trends, the Indo-U.S. relationship began to move from 'estrangement' to a 'strategic dialogue'. It initiated the process of 'cooperative contact' and 'strategic cooperation' between India and the United States. Since then, this strategic cooperation between the two states has witnessed tremendous progress. Although the process of strategic convergence between India and the U.S. was initiated by the Clinton administration (1993-2000), it was the George W. Bush administration (2001-2008), which altogether transformed the Indo-U.S. relations into a strategic partnership with the signing of New Framework for U.S.-India Defense Relations, Next Steps in Strategic

Partnership (NSSP), Civil Nuclear Deal and a number of agreements between India and the United States. The Obama administration (2009 to present) elevated the Indo-U.S. bilateral strategic partnership to the "Global Strategic Partnership" and thereby treated India as its closest ally like the United Kingdom, Japan, or Australia.

However, in spite of the fact that there has been unprecedented upward trajectory in the Indo-U.S. relations since the past two decades, the partnership between these two countries has not developed into a possibility of creating an alliance similar to that of the U.S.-Japan, or the U.S.-U.K. due to several factors. Moreover, along with the convergence of interests between India and the U.S., there have been some issues and irritants which have occasionally casted negative impact on Indo-U.S. strategic relations. For example, Pakistan factor and issues relating to counter-terrorism are the two important areas where the interests of the India and U.S. sometimes converge and sometimes diverge. Though the Clinton administration expressed the intention that he would de-hyphenate India's relations with Pakistan but the complete de-hyphenation has not occurred as yet. The main area of potential discord regarding Pakistan is India's weariness with the U.S.' inability to bring about pressure on Pakistan to stop pushing militants into the Indian side of Kashmir.²⁷ For India, Pakistan represents the epicenter of the terror threat against it, and Indian officials are frustrated that Washington has not taken required measures to pressurize Islamabad more aggressively to dismantle LeT's (*Lashker-e-Toiba*) and other Indian centric terrorist organization's infrastructure. While Washington realizes the danger that LeT poses to regional stability and has been vocal about bringing the Mumbai attackers to justice, it still does not meet India's expectations of placing it on an equal plane with Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations.²⁸ Moreover, the United States continues to provide military and civilian aid to Pakistan in its so called 'War on Terrorism'. However, this U.S. military aid to Pakistan is often used against India. It was in this context that on August, 2003 a ruling BJP (Bhartiya Janta Party) led NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government spokesperson said that the U.S. is 'encouraging terrorism' rather than fighting it by 'rewarding' Pakistan with US\$ one billion in debt forgiveness.²⁹ Indians are also frustrated with the U.S.' silence on China's nuclear and missile technology assistance to Pakistan.³⁰

The Indo-U.S. differences are also sometimes reflected on how to create a just and peaceful international order. In this regard, Indian strategic community have trouble in accepting the principle of humanitarian interventions and fear that the U.S. would extend the principle to South Asia - which means that the U.S. would support the principle of 'self determination' and press for a plebiscite in Kashmir.³¹ Moreover, India does not endorse or support the U.S. unilateralism. For example, the Indian government has called the U.S led war in Iraq as "unjustified" and "avoidable" and further public opinion polls indicate that up to 90 percent of Indians disapprove of the "unilateral" U.S. action.³²

Moreover, since its independence India have always resisted of becoming part of any alliance or group directed against any third country and therefore, maintained independence in her foreign policy-making.³³ Thus, the concept of "strategic autonomy" the idea that India must not allow any other country to exercise influence over its policy is a matter that India will continue to attach highest importance in the future. For example, the United States and India have for many years disagreed on how to deal with Iran's nuclear issue. Washington has adopted two-pronged approach to the Iranian nuclear issue which includes both diplomatic and military options. India on the other side, despite its support to the U.S. on the Iranian nuclear issue, has continued to maintain a friendly engagement with Iran sometimes at odds with the United States.³⁴ It not only reflects the strategic autonomy in India's foreign policy but also demonstrates that India remains firm in protecting its diplomatic and trade ties with Iran.³⁵

India has also apprehensions about the dependency and durability of the U.S. commitment regarding the transfer of high tech-products and the strings attached to it. For example, India always feels uneasiness with the defense sales provisions that the U.S. considers routine procedural matters (the question of end-use monitoring of military purchases).³⁶ According to *The Hindu*, (an Indian daily) during Obama's recent visit to India, New Delhi made 17 proposals regarding co-production and co-development projects. All the proposals were initially rejected by Washington due to the U.S. requirements on end-use monitoring and eventually only four were agreed upon.³⁷

Likewise, the strict provisions of the U.S. for the sale of defense equipment and India's reluctance to sign end-use monitoring agreements have also been problematic.

Moreover, though there has been a substantial progress in Indo-U.S. trade over the past two decades, there are still various issues between the two countries related to trade and economics. For instance, on India's side, the main complaints are concerned with negotiations on a bilateral investment treaty (BIT), U.S. restrictions on the trade in services (including the limited supply of H1-B visas), high-technology export controls, and the U.S. farm subsidy program. From the U.S. side, the key issues are related to intellectual property rights protection (IPRP), trade in dual-use technology, and access to selective Indian markets.³⁸

However, when the Indo-U.S. relations are examined in the broad spectrum of areas it becomes clear that there are more convergences than divergences. More importantly, the areas where they share identical interests are more crucial and affect the security of both these states such as fight against terrorism, defense and security cooperation, economic relations, proliferation of nuclear weapons, and above all the rise of China. On the other side, the areas where India and the U.S. held divergent views are not so effective and there is possibility that these divergences can be managed with the diplomatic maneuvering by both the states. For example, despite the U.S.' re-engagement with Pakistan, the post 9/11 scenario provided a new strategic attraction to bring India and the U.S. closer than ever before. The U.S.-Pakistan intimacy in the post 9/11 was viewed by India as a tactical move undertaken out of necessity and therefore, it did not react so vehemently as it might previously had done.³⁹ Likewise, despite India's inability to send troops to Iraq in 2003, the Bush administration was understanding and appreciative of India's domestic constraints, and there were no perceived adverse impacts on Indo-U.S. defense ties.⁴⁰ Thus in the future, despite some frictions in the Indo-U.S. bilateral relations, both will need each other in the construction of Asian stability, maritime security, economic prosperity, neutralization of extremist ideologies and terrorism, proliferation of nuclear weapons, and above all preventing any regional power (predictably China) to dominate the Asian region.

Clinton Administration (1993-2000)

In the initial years of Clinton administration, the U.S officials have arrived at a near consensus on two elements of South Asia policy. First, that India is rising rapidly toward great power status and second, that New Delhi and Washington are developing an increasingly close 'strategic cooperation'.⁴¹ In this regard, former Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbot's book *Engaging India* provides an interesting details about the process by which the U.S.' attitude towards India evolved from estrangement to engagement. He writes that in the very first years of his presidency, Clinton frequently referred to India as an important emerging power in the region and therefore, sought to forge a cooperative and friendly relations with it.⁴² However, the Indo-U.S. military and defense cooperation was already initiated during the Gulf War in early 90s when India fully cooperated with the U.S. by granting refueling rights to U.S. military aircrafts *en route* from the Pacific to the Middle East.⁴³ This process was further enhanced in 1991, when the U.S. Lieutenant-General Claude M. Kicklighter, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Army Pacific Command visited New Delhi. The Kicklighter proposals as they came to be known, contributed in a substantial way to the enhancement Indo-U.S. defense cooperation. These proposals included service-to-service exchanges and expansion of defense cooperation framework. Extensive Steering Groups (ESGs) were established in both the countries to intensify military-to-military cooperation. The Kicklighter proposals also enhanced the first ever Indo-U.S. military-to-military level exercises, keeping in view the U.S. policy of 'cooperative engagement' with military of the friendly countries.⁴⁴ The Clinton administration continued this process though there were also some frictions which occasionally strained the Indo-U.S. relations such as Clinton administration's insistence on India to rollback its nuclear program and to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Pakistan issue, and allegations of human rights violation by India in Kashmir.

However, in spite of these irritants which occasionally strained the relationship between the two countries, the overall bilateral relationship and especially the defense cooperation continued to flourish. This process was further intensified in May 1994, when India's Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao visited the United States. The visit

yielded positive results as both the U.S. and India expressed the intention to establish a 'New Partnership'.⁴⁵ While in Washington, President Clinton and Prime Minister Rao held extensive talks on security related concessions to make the strategic bargain workable and advantageous for both sides. It was also decided by both leaders to increase the defense and economic cooperation, advance the 1984 understanding on high technology transfer, and expand the official contacts between the two countries.⁴⁶ Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's U.S. visit was followed in 1995 by the beginning of tentative military collaboration, outlined in an 'Agreed Minutes on Defense Relations' which established an institutional framework that continue to structure Indo-U.S. military ties even today.⁴⁷ The Agreed Minutes on Indo-U.S. Defense Relations was regarded as a 'milestone' and 'beginning of a new era' in bilateral relations between the U.S. and India as it covered service-to-service, civilian-to-civilian, and cooperation in defense production and research.⁴⁸ Moreover, three separate groups were established to foster greater interaction and facilitate discussions on: (i) Joint Defense Policy Group (JDPG) of the Ministries of Defense for tackling issues of defense cooperation. (ii) Joint Technical Group (JTG) for addressing issues related to defense research and production cooperation, and (iii) Joint Steering Committee (JSC), to increase the frequency and scope of service-to-service cooperation.⁴⁹ Thus the Agreed Minutes on Defense Cooperation enhanced confidence building between the U.S. and India through exercises, promoted mutual understanding and enhanced high level official visits, both civilian and military.

During the second term of Clinton administration, a number of new elements were introduced into the U.S. policy towards the Sub-Continent which provided further impetus to the growing Indo-U.S. relations. According to C. Raja Mohan, these new elements included:

- I. The U.S. President Bill Clinton showed a renewed interest in the Sub-Continent and sought a sustained and renewed engagement with the region. Despite the continued political instability, its potential as an important future market was seen as of significant importance for the United States.

- II. The U.S. also began to recognize the potential of India's emergence as a major power in the international system. The prospect of India's transforming itself into one of the larger economies of the world provided some momentum for the U.S. to engage India in a framework that is broader than the Sub-Continent and is embedded in the Asian balance of power.
- III. The U.S. also signaled that it would formulate its policy towards India and Pakistan separately on their own merits and would no longer treat India and Pakistan as conjoined twins which must always be paired together in the U.S. thinking about the region. India welcomed this development.
- IV. On Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, the U.S.' emphasis also shifted from active and direct intervention to the promotion of an intensive dialogue between India and Pakistan. This development was also welcomed by India.
- V. The Clinton administration also indicated that although the non-proliferation issues remains at the top of the U.S. agenda for the Sub-Continent, it may not like to see its bilateral relationship with India becoming hostage to this issue.⁵⁰

For India, which saw its relationship with the United States as most important one in the post-Cold War period, the new U.S. approach was a welcome departure from its past policies, and raised expectations of a sustained high level engagement between the two countries. The growing Indo-U.S. relations particularly their evolving defense ties caused some concerns in China. China perceived these emerging ties as the initiation of new beginning in Indo-U.S. relations to contain the rising power of China. As one Chinese analyst wrote:

In recent years, while China is being regarded by the U.S. as its potential adversary of the 21st century, U.S.-India relations have witnessed a rapid development. Many Chinese analysts view this remarkable development in India-U.S. relations with concern, wondering if India could really forge an alliance with the United States against China. Although, both India and the U.S have indicated that the development of India-U.S. relations was not aimed at any third country, China will be on alert against any changes in its peripheral security environment.⁵¹

A Western expert also underlined this point by noting that, "China deeply fears Indian alignment with the United States and/or U.S. disengagement from Pakistan that would leave China with complete responsibility for supporting that country. China can accept a nuclear armed India. However, India aligned with the U.S. and cooperating with the U.S politically and militarily is more troubling aspect".⁵²

These two statements reflect the nature of China's apprehensions about the growing Indo-U.S. relations. Most pertinently, the defense and military cooperation which followed after the Signing of Agreed Minutes on Defense Relations between India and the U.S., was very disturbing development for China.

However, for China's advantage, this increasing Indo-U.S convergence was abruptly interrupted by India's May, 1998 nuclear tests. These nuclear tests shuttered the prospects for the Indo-U.S. 'strategic dialogue' and put back all efforts to revitalize the bilateral relations in the post-Cold War period.⁵³ The U.S. President Bill Clinton stated that he was "deeply disturbed by these tests" and further added that "this action by India not only threatens stability of the region, it directly challenges the firm international consensus to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction".⁵⁴ Following the nuclear tests on 11 and 13 May, 1998 by India, the Clinton administration imposed economic and military sanctions on India, mandated by Section 102 of the Arms Exporting Control Act (AECA).⁵⁵ Thus, the nuclear tests conducted by India put a hold on Indo-U.S. cooperative ties. After India's nuclear tests, India and China tried their best to gain more and more U.S. support for their respective point of view. So far as India was concerned, it tried to win the U.S. understanding of her nuclear tests by stressing China's nuclear threat and its role in assisting Pakistan's nuclear and missile program. For instance, the *Annual Report 1997-1998* of India's Ministry of Defense published after the nuclear tests, stated:

China's assistance to Pakistan's nuclear weapons program and the sale of missiles and missile technology to Pakistan also directly affect India's security.....There are credible and well documented reports of outside assistance to Pakistan in these fields despite the existence of multilateral export control regimes, unilateral declarations of restraint and supply restrictions in producer countries.⁵⁶

Moreover, referring to the nuclear threat directly emanating from China, the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee wrote a letter to the U.S. President in which he stated that:

We have an overt nuclear weapons state on our borders, a state that committed armed aggression against India in 1962. Although our relations with that country have improved in the last decade or so, an atmosphere of distrust persists mainly due to the unresolved border problem. To add to the distress, that country has materially helped another neighbor of ours to become a covert nuclear weapons state. At the hands of this bitter neighbor, we have suffered three aggressions in the last 50 years.⁵⁷

Thus India justified its nuclear tests due to the nuclear threat from China and its nuclear and missile assistance to Pakistan. Predictably, this anti-China justification by India to its nuclear tests irked China. As one eminent Chinese scholar Wang Hongwe wrote, "Although the Chinese side expressed understanding of India's need to carry-out nuclear tests for its security needs, it could not understand why India thinks China's nuclear weapons are threat to India, and felt that India should not have used China as a reason for its plans for realizing nuclear weapons".⁵⁸ Besides these verbal attacks, Beijing also took some concrete measures to show its resentment at India. For instance, China suspended the meeting of Joint Working Group (JWG) on the border and further increased its support for Pakistan's missile development efforts and demonstratively diversified its joint arms production with Pakistan including military aircrafts. In addition to it, Beijing also expressed the intention that it might return to pro-Pakistan position on Kashmir.⁵⁹ The main aim of all these measures taken by China was that India should draw back the words about China constituting a threat to India. However, in broader perspective, Beijing wanted to outbid New Delhi in securing the U.S. support against India. In this effort, China was successful to a great extent in neutralizing India's attempt to play the U.S. card against China.

So far as the United States was concerned, its response to the South Asian nuclear crises was guided by non-proliferation concerns and a desire for better relations with China. This thinking and this orientation gave U.S. policy a distinctively pro-China cast which can be gauged from the Joint China-U.S. Statement of 1998 on South Asia.⁶⁰ At

the same time, India was strongly opposed to U.S. endorsement of China playing a larger role in South Asia because it was concerned about Chinese proliferation activities in the region.⁶¹ Later on, to discuss the non-proliferation issue with New Delhi, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbot initiated dialogue with India's Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh from July to November 1998.⁶² The dialogue was successful to a great extent in the sense that it removed the misunderstanding between the two sides and made Washington aware of India's rationale for nuclear tests. In Talbot's own words, "India has put on notice that it was now unambiguously, unapologetically, and irrevocably, a nuclear armed power".⁶³ It was this realization which forced the Clinton administration to abandon its declared policy to "Cap, Rollback, and Eliminate", India's nuclear program.⁶⁴ In November 1998, President Clinton decided to use the Brownback Amendment to ease sanctions against India and Pakistan in response to positive steps taken by both the countries. Furthermore, during the Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan, the U.S. leaned more towards India by putting pressure on Pakistan to pull back its troops from the region. China also remained neutral in this short India-Pakistan conflict. In the following years of Kargil conflict, there was some degree of convergence of approach between the U.S. and China with regard to India, although, the tilt of U.S. towards India was visible. This tilt was distinctly manifested when President Bill Clinton visited India in 2000. Clinton's five day stay in India and only a transit halt of few hours in Pakistan demonstrated that the Clinton administration's priority was to strengthen its ties with India.⁶⁵ It is widely argued that Clinton's visit to India was in recognition of India's new status after its nuclear tests. Speaking at the U.S. Institute of Peace on 9 March, 2000, Karl Inderfurth said that U.S.-India relations would not be hostage to U.S. relations with any other country and that India was viewed as a "key player in global affairs in the 21st century and as a vital contributor to overall Asian regional peace and stability".⁶⁶ A few days later, Secretary of State Madeline Albright in her remarks on Asia in New York said that though the U.S. and India differ on various strategic issues including on the nuclear issues, these issues would not be allowed to stand in the way of emerging cooperative relationship between the two states.⁶⁷ Moreover, economic cooperation with India was also a major focus of Clinton's India visit as he announced US\$ 2 billion in government financial support for U.S. exports to India through the U.S. Export-Import Bank. The two

countries also agreed to establish working groups on trade; clean energy and environment; and science and technology to expand bilateral economic and trade ties.⁶⁸

During his visit to India, President Clinton and Prime Minister Vajpayee resolved to create a closer and qualitatively new relationship between the U.S. and India and in this regard, issued a Vision Statement, 'U.S.-India Relationship: A Vision for the 21st Century' on 21 March, 2000. The Vision Statement institutionalized dialogue between the two countries through a range of high-level meetings and working groups on the various areas of cooperation. This Vision Statement noted that:

- I. At the dawn of new century, Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Clinton resolve to create a closer and qualitatively new relationship between India and the United States.
- II. Together we represent a fifth of the world's economy. In many ways, the character of the 21st century world will depend on the success of cooperation for peace, prosperity, democracy, and freedom.
- III. In the new century, India and the U.S. will be new partners in peace, with a common interest in and complementary responsibility for ensuring regional and international security.
- IV. India and the U.S. share a commitment to reducing and ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons but we have not always agreed on how to reach this common goal. To this end, we will persist with the productive bilateral dialogue already under way.
- V. Our nations pledge to reduce impediments of bilateral trade and investment and expand commerce between us, especially in the emerging knowledge based industries and high technology areas.
- VI. For India and the U.S., this is a day of new beginnings. We have before us for the first time in 50 years the possibility to realize the full potential of our relationship.⁶⁹

This Vision Statement initiated the process of new relationship between India and the U.S. based on common goals and shared values. The most important thing was that

the nuclear issue was not allowed to come in the way of overall expansion of Indo-U.S. relations despite the fact that it was still a major irritant between the two countries. In the words of Albright, "it was the beginning of a new chapter", or, as senior U.S. official put it, "what we have heard this week is the sound of ice melting....a relationship that for the 50 years was frozen in the contours of the Cold War".⁷⁰ So far as India was concerned, it viewed Clinton's visit and the subsequent issuance of Joint Vision Statement on the future of Indo-U.S. relations as one of the most important developments in its relationship with the sole Super Power. For instance, an Indian analyst stated that Clinton's visit to India "have brought about a sea change in U.S. policy towards South Asia", and "it appears to be tilting towards India", hence, "certainly, a new phase is deemed to have begun in Indo-U.S. relations since the visit of Clinton".⁷¹ More importantly, the Indians showed significant appreciation for the Vision Statement during the Clinton's India visit. It was regarded as a blueprint or roadmap for the future of Indo-U.S. constructive relationship.

Later, the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee paid a return visit to the U.S. in September 2000. Both sides recognized that the visit helped in accelerating the upward path in bilateral relations, thus contributing the process of building the new relationship as envisaged in the 'Vision Statement of March 2000'.⁷² The two sides placed the bilateral relationship in the larger international context based on shared values and growing convergence of interests. Due to this fact, the U.S. side reiterated that the Indo-U.S. relations would become one of the important factors in international affairs in the near future.⁷³ The U.S. media was also highly appreciative of Vajpayee's U.S. Visit. For instance, an editorial in the *New York Times* entitled "A 'Tilt' towards India" on 20 September, 2000 wrote:

Two years ago, India's nuclear tests provoked worldwide condemnation and retaliatory sanctions by the United States. Yet in recent months, culminating in Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Washington last weekend, the United States has drawn closer to India diplomatically than at any time since the early 1960s. President Clinton has shaped a new foreign policy course in South Asia by embracing India and distancing the United States from Pakistan's military government. These steps have far reaching ramifications

for all Asia including China, as well as for the issue of nuclear proliferation. The shift is justified by India's growing importance.⁷⁴

It was Vajpayee's U.S. visit that helped to promote the term "natural ally" as there was renewed appreciation of India's democracy and status in the United States. Thus from the preceding discussion, it is observed that in the post-Cold War period, Indo-U.S. relations witnessed a positive trend due to the complementary nature of interests of the two states. Besides the military and defense ties which were initiated with the Kicklighter Proposals and Agreed Minutes on Defense Relations in 1991 and 1995 respectively, the bilateral economic cooperation has also increased between the two countries. The Indo-U.S. merchandise trade has doubled during the Clinton administration with US\$ 7,331.5 million in 1993 to US\$ 14,353.9 million in 2000. The gradual rise of this Indo-U.S. merchandise trade during these eight years can be seen from the Table 4 which also shows the U.S. trade imbalance with India. The gradual rise of this Indo-U.S. merchandise trade can be seen from Table 4 which also shows the U.S. trade imbalance with India.⁷⁵

Table 4
India-U.S. Bilateral Merchandise Trade, 1993-2000
(in millions of U.S. dollars)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Exports to India	2,777.9	2,293.8	3,295.8	3,328.2	3,060.7	3,564.5	3,687.8	3,667.3
Imports from India	4553.6	5,309.6	5,726.3	6,169.5	7,322.5	8237.2	9,070.8	10,686.6
Total Trade	7,331.5	7,603.4	9,022.1	9,497.7	10,383.2	11,801.7	12,758.6	14,353.9
Trade Balance	-1,775.7	-3,015.8	-2,430.5	-2,841.3	-3,715.0	-4672.7	5,383.0	-7,019.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade, Available at <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5330.html> (Accessed on 10 November, 2015).

Moreover, according to official U.S. data, between 1990 and 2000 the U.S. investments in India rose from US\$ 372 million to US\$ 2.4 billion - an increase of over US\$ 2 billion over 10 years.⁷⁶ However, it is also observed that the Clinton administration was unable to make the final break with its failed nuclear non-proliferation policy in the region. As long as nuclear non-proliferation remained the bench mark from

the U.S. stand point of view, there were strict limits beyond which the bilateral relationship could not improve. In addition to it, Clinton's foreign policy, influenced by commercial interests, preferred China to India. China was at a relatively more advanced stage of economic liberalization and development. China's huge market, excellent infrastructure facilities and business friendly environment looked more suitable for the U.S. investments than India which was in the initial stage of liberalization and behind China in several ways. In matters of nuclear non-proliferation and missile development also, China got greater weightage as Beijing joined the U.S. led non-proliferation regime. Thus, China won more concessions from the U.S. than did India. It is due to these facts that while the Indo-U.S. relations improved a lot but at the same time, the U.S. approach towards China was also conciliatory as the Clinton administration termed China as a "strategic partner". Nevertheless, the Clinton administration's policies had provided the new and constructive framework for Indo-U.S. ties on which the new incoming Bush administration could build further momentum. In fact, it was Clinton himself who remarked that he was handing over Indo-U.S. relations to his successor in the "best possible health".⁷⁷

Bush Administration (2001-2008)

The new incoming President George W. Bush in the early years of his administration signaled that it would continue Clinton's policy of developing better relations with India. This policy of Bush administration to engage India illustrated continuity in contrast to the more typical tendency of the new Republican administration to reverse or disassociate any strategy that was associated with its predecessor.⁷⁸ The new administration actively sought new ways to build on the process that Clinton had initiated. Even before Bush was inaugurated as a President, his advisors talked about how to transform the Indo-U.S. relationship "on the enduring foundation of shared democratic values and congruent national interests".⁷⁹ As one analyst recalled in January 2001, "knowing the Prime Minister Vajpayee believed that the United States and India were natural allies, we developed a road map.....to accomplish the strategic invigoration of the bilateral relationship" that was subsequently approved by the Bush.⁸⁰ India's fast growing economy, its booming information technology sector, and its position as a relatively

stable democratic and nuclear power in a volatile region argued for deepening India-U.S. ties. Moreover, some U.S. officials perceived that India could provide a useful counterweight to China which the Bush administration termed as "strategic competitor" in contrast to Clinton administration which had treated China as "strategic partner". In this regard, the importance of India vis-a-vis China can be seen from the appointment of Robert Blackwill as the U.S. Ambassador to India. Blackwill a close confidant to President Bush and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice was widely regarded as a specialist on Chinese strategic affairs. In contrast, this important post was laying vacant in most years of the Clinton administration.⁸¹ All these moves demonstrated that the Bush administration would led Indo-U.S. relations to new heights and China factor will also remain an important part of this process. As Ashley J. Tellis observed:

The first term of George W. Bush's Presidency, which began in 2001, forged the conclusive transformation in U.S.-India relations. Bush's interest in and admiration for the success of Indian democracy spurred on intense Presidential commitment to a strategic partnership based on common values. This conviction, drawn from the idealist strands of American foreign policy, was complemented by an equally necessity rooted in real politicks: the need to build new ties with India to balance China, Asia's other rising behemoth and a potential challenger to U.S. power.⁸²

Driven by these considerations, the new U.S. administration began to cultivate more close and intimate relations with India. In May of 2001, the United States announced its plans for developing a Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system and conveyed this decision to India also. India warmly welcomed this important decision taken by the Bush administration. Subsequently, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage visited India, Japan and the Republic of Korea to discuss the issue of developing BMD.⁸³ It was the first time that the U.S. was according India the status of an important partner in Asia on strategic issues. In other words, it can be said that strategic element in the Indo-U.S. relations has began to become more apparent. India also welcomed this increased U.S. interest and over the course of Bush Presidency, the two countries found many promising new areas of cooperation. The first test of this new relationship came on 11 September, 2001 (popularly called 9/11) when there were

massive terrorist attacks on the U.S. soil. India's response was quick and significant with Jaswant Singh saying, "We will provide whatever assistance required from India to the U.S. to fight the menace of terrorism".⁸⁴ This support included the use of numerous Indian military bases, aircraft refueling and maintenance support, over flight rights, intelligence cooperation, and port facilities for the U.S. warships.⁸⁵ These were the bold decisions on the side of India so far its cooperation against war on terrorism was concerned. As one analyst observed, this offer was never made even to the India's Cold War patron, the Soviet Union.⁸⁶ In the subsequent years, there was considerable counter-terrorism cooperation between the two countries in the areas of law enforcement, including programs developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Diplomatic Security Anti-Terrorism Assistance (DSATA), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).⁸⁷ Bilaterally too, the Indo-U.S. Counter-Terrorism Joint Working Group's (CTJWG') agenda was considerably strengthened. CTJWG became one of the premier and useful means for exchanging of intelligence and sharing of information, devising anti-terrorism training programs and other areas of mutual concern between the two countries.⁸⁸

Thus, the 9/11 incident produced further opportunities for the evolving Indo-U.S. strategic partnership. However, it is also observed that despite wide-ranging anti-terrorism cooperation, there were also some differences relating to this issue mostly from the Indian side. The most disturbing development for India was the renewed U.S.-Pakistan relationship in the post 9/11 period. The United States termed Pakistan as the frontline state and an important ally in the war against terrorism and later on revived Defense Consultation Group (DCG) to reestablish military cooperation with Pakistan. It was in this context that the U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld asserted that the U.S. believes that the ties with Pakistan are long, 'strategic' and 'mutually beneficial,' and also added that he looked forward to "strengthening it in a variety of different ways".⁸⁹ From India's perspective, Pakistan itself was the epicenter of terrorism rather than part of the solution. India complained that by supporting Pakistan, the U.S. has turned a blind eye to cross-border terrorism based in or supported by Pakistan. India accused Washington of adopting double standards on terrorism by acting against those

terrorist that threatens its own security and not against those terrorists that threatens India's security. Though Washington took some positive steps by listing *Lashkar-e-Toiba* (LeT) and other Pakistan based terrorist groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations, it could not satisfy New Delhi as the U.S. termed these groups as 'stateless' terrorist organizations aiming at both India and Pakistan.⁹⁰ In China, this sharp down turn in India-U.S. relations generated great expectation because from Chinese perspectives, United States' renewed relationship with the Pakistan will naturally distance India from the U.S. and possibly would bind the U.S., China and Pakistan together. However, this assessment of China did not materialize as the Bush administration officials assured India that the U.S.' engagement with Pakistan would not be at the cost of India. In this regard, Donald Rumsfeld, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, assured New Delhi that "U.S.' policy towards South Asia, in renewing the relationship with Pakistan, would not overlook India's interests".⁹¹ Subsequently, it was decided by both India and the U.S. that the short term difference relating to Pakistan and terrorism should not thwart their long term convergence on common security and defense cooperation, economic and strategic interests and on other shared values.

China on the other side, while realizing that the trivial issues between India and the U.S. relating to Pakistan and terrorism are not going to affect the growing intimacy between India and the U.S. in any substantial way, began to cultivate ties with Pakistan more aggressively. For instance, during a massive border face-off between India and Pakistan in the wake of terrorist attacks on India's Parliament in December, 2001, China provided about two dozen of F-7 fighter jets, nuclear and missile components, and other military hardware to Pakistan to shore-up its defense capabilities vis-a-vis India. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) also increased their military drills along the Sino-Indian border notably in the Tibet and Urumqi regions.⁹² These moves by China were a veiled warning to India for taking any military action against Pakistan and also at growing Indian inclination towards the United States.

Thus, despite differing perceptions pertaining to Pakistan and war on terrorism, the Indo-U.S. relations continued to grow in a positive direction. This trend was further solidified in November 2001 when Prime Minister Vajpayee visited the United States.

During his U.S. visit, Vajpayee held extensive talks with President Bush and the two leaders reiterated their commitment to complete the process of qualitatively transforming Indo-U.S. relations in pursuit of their many common goals in Asia and beyond. They announced a number of new initiatives for dialogue and cooperation in the areas of defense, high technology, commerce, counter-terrorism, space, nuclear energy, bilateral economic dialogue and Afghanistan.⁹³

In recognition of their shared strategic interests in Asia and beyond, the two sides took a number of steps to resume and qualitatively expand defense relations. In this regard the meeting between India's Defense Minister and the U.S. Defense Secretary on 6 April, 2001 laid the foundation for resumption of defense relations.⁹⁴ The Indo-U.S. Defense Policy Group (DPG), which met on 3-4 December, 2001 decided to resume the Army, Air Force, and Navy Executive Steering Groups and set-up a Military Coordination Group (MCG) to promote military-to-military exchanges and joint activities. This was the first Indo-U.S. Defense Policy Group (DPG) meeting since India's nuclear tests in May, 1998. Moreover, in the context of their expanding dialogue on international security issues, India and the U.S. have begun regular Consultations on New Strategic Framework Dialogue.⁹⁵ With these new developments, the Bush administration lifted all economic, military, and technological sanctions on India which were imposed on her in the wake of nuclear tests on May, 1998.

Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP)

In the subsequent years, it was felt by many observers that the pace of strategic cooperation between the U.S. and India was getting sluggish. This observation was correct to some extent due to the U.S. engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, since 2001 New Delhi has constantly sought from Washington to ease restrictions on the export to India of dual-use high-technology goods as well as to increase civilian nuclear and civilian space cooperation. These three key issues came to be known as the “trinity,” and from Indian perspective progress in these areas was necessary to provide tangible evidence of a transformed India-U.S. cooperation. Later on, the issue of missile defense was also added to these three issues and was generally referred to as “quartet”.⁹⁶ But the

U.S. has always shown inactivity in transferring high leverage military technologies to India for the fear of undermining regional stability which in turn has created doubts in the minds of Indians about Washington's reliability as a dependable supplier.⁹⁷ In order to remove these fears and to reinvigorate Indo-U.S. relations, New Delhi and Washington committed in January 2004 to a process known as "Next Steps in Strategic Partnership" or NSSP. The NSSP was a phased effort to ease restrictions on India's access to U.S. technology in four areas: (i) dual use items; (ii) civilian nuclear applications; (iii) civilian space cooperation; and (iv) ballistic missile defense.⁹⁸

This agreement, it was argued would allow India greater access to U.S. high technology in exchange for placing substantial control measures to check their unauthorized proliferation. India was also obliged not to divert these technologies towards its strategic programs.⁹⁹ In a press statement on NSSP, President Bush remarked:

The United States and India agree to expand cooperation in three specific areas: civilian nuclear activities, civilian space programs, and high technology trade. In addition, we agree to expand our dialogue on missile defense. Cooperation in these areas will deepen the ties of commerce and friendship between our two nations, and will increase stability in Asia and beyond.¹⁰⁰

He further added, "the expanded cooperation launched today is an important milestone in transforming the relationship between the United States and India".¹⁰¹ For India's advantage, the NSSP does not ask it to give-up its nuclear weapons capability or to sign non-proliferation treaty and in this context, it was an important development. The U.S. was no longer seeking, as it has so often in the past, to raise the bar ever higher to prevent technology exchange to satisfy its non-proliferation policies.¹⁰² These were precisely the issues on which India has been seeking cooperation from the United States. As Ashley J. Tellis noted, "the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership initiative was decisive in so far as it signaled a breakthrough in U.S.-India strategic cooperation. Despite continuing disagreements over issues such as trade, Iraq, and the United Nations, with this initiative, both countries agreed to work together despite India's continuing possession of nuclear weaponry".¹⁰³

The year 2004 was important for Indo-U.S. relations as there was change of governments in both the countries. While in the United States, George W. Bush was reelected as the U.S. President for the second term, in India it was the new Congress-led UPA (United Progress Alliance) government under the Prime Ministership of Dr. Manmohan Singh which came to power. The common message emerging from both the capitals after the elections was to continue positive trend in Indo-U.S. relations and to upgrade their bilateral relations into a strategic partnership.¹⁰⁴ In the second term of Bush administration, various U.S. think tanks and experts also endorsed the view that the United States should upgrade the relation with India to higher level and diversify its strategic partnership with India. For instance, Ashley J. Tellis in one of his reports which he presented to the House Committee on International Relations on 15 June, 2004 prepared under the leading American think tank, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, recommended that to align India, the U.S. should take the following five steps:

- I. In order to prevent the dominance of Asia by China, the United States should endorse and support India in enhancing its military and economic power.
- II. The United States should treat India and Pakistan separately and the former should be provided more military and economic aid.
- III. The United States should support India's membership in various international elite institutions such as International Energy Agency (IEA), UN Security Council, APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), and G-8.
- IV. India should be provided access to the U.S. dual-use technology including nuclear safety equipment.
- V. The United States should not object to the India's bid for diversifying its energy resources including the Iran-India gas pipeline project.¹⁰⁵

In the light of these recommendations and various others, the United States intensified its strategic partnership with India. In this regard, the bilateral exchanges at the highest level were made frequent. For instance, there were three notable bilateral exchanges in the first eighteen months of new government in the United States, such as Condoleeza Rice's visit to New Delhi in March, 2005, Manmohan Singh's visit to

Washington in July, 2005, and Bush's visit to New Delhi in March, 2006. When Rice visited India in March 2005, she brought with her an outline of the Second Bush Administration's Grand Strategy for India.¹⁰⁶ She conveyed to the Indian Prime Minister that the United States was willing to help India to become a major power in the 21st century. In this regard, the U.S. would not oppose India's nuclear program and would make civilian nuclear cooperation the foundation of the new relationship with India.¹⁰⁷ The formal talks on civilian nuclear cooperation were formally initiated with the Dr. Manmohan Singh's U.S. visit in July, 2005. During the U.S. visit, Prime Minister Singh and President Bush issued a Joint Statement, in which it was resolved to "transform the relationship between their countries and establish a global partnership".¹⁰⁸ Moreover, recognizing the significance of civilian nuclear energy, the two leaders discussed India's plans to develop its nuclear energy. In this regard, President Bush stated that "as a responsible state with advanced technology, India should acquire the same benefits and advantages as other such states."¹⁰⁹ Bush also assured Dr. Singh that the U.S. would do its best to adjust international norms to facilitate full civil nuclear cooperation with India.

On India's side, Dr. Singh assured that "India would reciprocally agree to resume the same responsibilities and practices as other leading countries with advanced nuclear technology, such as the United States".¹¹⁰ These responsibilities according to Prime Minister included, "identifying and separating civilian and military nuclear facilities and filling a declaration regarding civilian facilities with IAEA; voluntarily placing civilian nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards and signing an additional IAEA protocol with respect to these facilities; and harmonization and adherence to MTCR, NSG guidelines".¹¹¹

The announcement made by President Bush and Prime Minister Singh to enter into a nuclear agreement in Washington laid the foundations for the resumption of U.S. international nuclear trade with India in the following years.¹¹² India was denied this access to the nuclear trade for the last 30 years because India is neither a signatory to the NPT nor allows IAEA safeguards on all its nuclear facilities.¹¹³ It was a remarkable strategic gain for India as the U.S. has tacitly accepted India as a nuclear state and informally treated it as a member of the privileged nuclear club (the U.S., Britain, France,

China and Russia).¹¹⁴ In this regard, India's Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran while talking to media said, "What has been achieved is recognition by the U.S. that, for all practical purposes, India should have the same benefits and rights as a nuclear weapons state".¹¹⁵ Thus, the decision of the two countries to move to obtain full nuclear energy cooperation was a 'huge step' in broadening the scope of strategic partnership between India and the United States.

The initiation of nuclear cooperation between India and the U.S. was not a welcome development for China. China alleged that the United States was tilting towards India in an apparent move to contain the rise of China. In this regard, China's leading and officially controlled daily *Renmin Ribao* (6 October, 2006) warned the U.S. that if it made a "nuclear exception" for India, other powers (including China) would do the same with their friends, such as Bangladesh, Burma, Iran, and Pakistan and thereby weaken the global non-proliferation regime.¹¹⁶ It further stated that:

Now that the United States buys another country in with nuclear technologies in defiance of international treaty, other nuclear suppliers also have their own partners of interest as well as the good reasons to copy what the United States did... A domino effect of nuclear proliferation, once turned into reality, will definitely lead to global nuclear proliferation and competition.¹¹⁷

Likewise *People's Daily* (online 20 July, 2005) described the agreement as reflecting "victory of power politics against NPT".¹¹⁸ It further questioned (22 July, 2005) that how India should be provided nuclear technology transfer in accordance with the U.S. domestic laws or NPT when it is not party to the latter. It further criticized that India has developed its nuclear arsenal clandestinely and promised to open its civilian nuclear facilities to international inspection only while denying the same access to the military nuclear facilities.¹¹⁹

New Framework for U.S.-India Defense Relations

Prior to Manmohan Singh's visit to United States in July 2005, an important development took place in Indo-U.S. defense relations in June 2005 when a "New Framework for U.S.-India Defense Relations" was signed between the U.S. and India.¹²⁰ This agreement

was designed to help India to become a major world power and thereby protect and advance the U.S. goals in the region.¹²¹ Through this new framework, it was agreed to constitute a new 'Defense Procurement and Production Group' under the U.S.-India Defense Policy Group (DPG) to examine defense trade, prospects for co-production and technology collaboration and research development. The United States asserted that the defense pact with India was based on the global security challenges and to secure its interests in the South Asian region. Moreover, the Defense Framework was regarded as a logical offshoot of the growing strategic partnership between India and the United States. Another important feather was added to the Indo-U.S. strategic cooperation in July, 2005 when the U.S. Department of State announced successful completion of NSSP.¹²² The successful completion of this initiative cleared the way for even greater engagement in a number of key areas in which cooperation has previously been limited or non-existent. In this regard, a *Fact Sheet*, released by the U.S. Department of State on 18 July, 2005 stated that:

Completion of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership demonstrates that President Bush's and Prime Minister Singh's vision of U.S.-India strategic partnership is becoming a reality, and paves the way for greater cooperation on strategic, energy security, and economic matters. Our two nations are committed to building upon the progress made since January, 2005 and working to identify new ways to expand the growing cooperative relationship.¹²³

Many other observers saw in the NSSP evidence of a major positive shift in the U.S. strategic orientation toward India, a shift later illuminated more starkly with Bush administration's intention to initiate full civil nuclear cooperation with India.¹²⁴

Thus the three important developments such as July, 2005 U.S.-India Joint Statement; June, 2005 U.S.-India Defense Framework Agreement and July, 2005 Completion of NSSP were important landmarks in furthering and strengthening Indo-U.S. strategic partnership. The rationale for the U.S. in enhancing its relations with India has been summarized by Ashley J. Tellis in the following words:

Augmenting Indian power is judged to be essential to U.S. interests because it permits Washington to 'pursue balance-of-power strategy' among those rising powers and key regional states in Asia which are not part of the existing U.S. alliance structure - including China, India, and a currently weakened Russia', a strategy that 'seeks to prevent any one of these (countries) from effectively threatening the security of another (or that of the United States) while simultaneously preventing any combination of these (entities) from 'bandwagoning' to undercut critical U.S. strategic interests in Asia.¹²⁵

The growing Indo-U.S. strategic partnership as reflected from the above three important developments were perceived by Beijing as an attempt by the United States and India to contain China. The Chinese apprehensions regarding the growing intimacy between India and the United States began to emerge even prior to Dr. Singh's U.S. visit of July, 2005 when a leading Chinese daily *Global Times* (1 July, 2005) observed that the "Ten Years U.S.-India Defense Cooperation Agreement" was "another U.S. step which is partly intended to diminish China's influence in Asia and to safeguard and expand U.S. strategic interests in the region".¹²⁶ Similarly, the *Global News*, (21 July, 2005) another Chinese daily wrote that, "behind the U.S. selection of India as its strategic weapon, lies the U.S. understanding that India being the rising power has the required potential to restrict the growing power of China in the region".¹²⁷ So far as India's rationale in strengthening its relations with the United States are concerned, the *Beijing Review* noted that it can fulfill India's long cherished goal of becoming a major world power. It further added that, "since the 90s, rapid economic growth has boasted India's comprehensive national strength and as a result, the country has growing desire to reshape the world. India really needs support from the U.S., since their 'quasi-ally' will help India play a larger role in the world".¹²⁸ Even though both India and the United States categorically denied that their relationship is directed against China, there is no doubt that the United States wants India to emerge as a strong power so that it can play an important role in the region and in the long run balance China's power should the need arise.¹²⁹

Thus in spite of these grave concerns expressed by China at the U.S. endorsement of India to emerge as a big power, the Bush administration continued the policy of engaging India at the highest level. In order to further boost the Indo-U.S. strategic

partnership in diverse areas, President Bush visited India from 1-3 March, 2006. During his India visit, President Bush and Prime Minister Singh issued a Joint Statement outlining the main elements of understanding on various bilateral and international issues. On Indo-U.S. defense relations, the Joint Statement welcomed, "increased cooperation between the U.S. and India since the New Framework for U.S.-India Defense Relationship was signed on 28 June, 2005 as evidenced by successful joint exercises, expanded defense cooperation, and information sharing, and greater opportunities to jointly develop technologies".¹³⁰ On maritime cooperation, the Joint Statement reaffirmed their commitment, "to the protection of the free flow of commerce and to the safety of navigation, and agreed to the conclusion of a Maritime Cooperation Framework to enhance security in the maritime dominion to prevent piracy and other transnational crimes at sea".¹³¹ Similarly on container security initiative, the statement welcomed, "India's intention to join the Container Security Initiative aimed at making global maritime trade and infrastructure more secure and reducing risk of shipping containers being used to conceal weapons of mass destruction".¹³² The visit also saw an agreement on India's nuclear separation plan under bilateral civil nuclear understanding. Thus during the Bush's India visit, most of the emphasis was focused on maritime security and the nuclear cooperation between the U.S and India. It was due to this enhancing understanding between the U.S. and India that paved the way for the operationalization of the Indo-U.S. Civil Nuclear Cooperation in the subsequent years.

Operationalization of Indo-U.S. Civil Nuclear Cooperation

The United States and India took various steps to implement the understanding on resumption of civil nuclear energy cooperation that was reached in July, 2005. For instance, the Hyde Act that legally enables resumption of full civil nuclear energy cooperation between the U.S. and India was passed by the U.S. Congress on 8-9 December, 2006 and signed into law by President Bush on 18 December, 2006.¹³³ Thereafter, in July, 2007, India and the U.S. declared that they have concluded negotiations on a peaceful nuclear cooperation (123 Agreement) and called it a 'historic milestone' in Indo-U.S. relations.¹³⁴ After passing through various phases, nuclear deal between India and the U.S. got final approval from the U.S. House of Representatives on

28 September, 2008 and from Senate on 1 October, 2008. The deal was finally turned into law when President Bush signed it on 8 October, 2008 and this new law come to be known as the "United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Enhancement Act".¹³⁵ On 10 October, 2008, the deal reached its final culmination when India's Foreign Minister and the U.S. Secretary of State formally signed the accord in Washington. The Agreement known as 123 Agreement¹³⁶ operationalized the nuclear deal between the United States and India.¹³⁷

The nuclear deal between India and the U.S. added further strategic content to the relationship between the two countries. It also diversified the opportunities for bilateral economic and high technology engagement. In this regard, Under Secretary of State Burns, called the nuclear agreement "perhaps the single most important initiative that India and the United States have agreed to in the 60 years of our relationship" and "the symbolic centre-piece of growing global partnership between our two countries".¹³⁸

China was keenly watching all these developments relating to nuclear cooperation between India and the U.S. Initially, it did not showed much resentment at the deal and just stressed that the U.S. must abide by the rules of the global non-proliferation regime.¹³⁹ This cautious approach can be reflected from the statement of China's Foreign Ministry when it stated that the Indo-U.S. nuclear agreement/deal must confirm to the rules of the global non- proliferation regime.¹⁴⁰ However, China's state controlled media was highly critical of the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal which also reflected to some extent the official stance. For instance, *China Daily*, commented, "the United States' making an exception to accommodate India" is driven by "geopolitical considerations in maintaining strategic balance". This has repercussions for the nuclear non-proliferation regime as "U.S.-India nuclear cooperation might encourage other nuclear powers to have nuclear cooperation with their partners, which might trigger a chain of reaction of nuclear-technology proliferations".¹⁴¹

Thus, China criticized the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal and asserted that it would undermine the non-proliferation efforts. Beijing was also critical of growing Indo-U.S. ties and asserted that the United States was seeking to use India to counter-balance

China's growing power in Asia. After the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal, China signed the nuclear agreement with Pakistan in which China committed to provide two nuclear reactors to Pakistan at Chasma.¹⁴² This nuclear deal between China and Pakistan at the cost of US\$ 9.6 billion was perceived as a continuing effort to respond to the Indo-U.S. civil nuclear deal which ended a decade's long moratorium on U.S. companies selling nuclear technology to India, despite India not being a signatory to the NPT.¹⁴³ China's criticism to the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal and later China-Pakistan nuclear cooperation created new sources of tension and mutual suspicion between India and China.

In 2008, the Bush administration completed its second term. However, like Clinton, Bush ended his Presidency with a strong strategic partnership with India and further strengthened it with the Indo-U.S. Civil Nuclear Deal. According to Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra, "in one stroke India ceased to be the target of the U.S sponsored international non-proliferation regime and a new paradigm of Indo-U.S. engagement emerged incorporating almost all conceivable dimension of cooperation and initiatives".¹⁴⁴ Besides the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal which ended decades of nuclear apartheid of India, the two countries during these eight years signed significant agreements including the New Framework for U.S.-Indian Defense Relations, NSSP, and a number of MoUs on health, education, science and technology, and on other areas of mutual interest. Moreover, trade and economic relations also witnessed a significant upward trend as a result of overall good relations between India and the United States. Economic cooperation is a core element of the Indo-U.S. strategic partnership. In this regard, Indo-U.S. merchandise trade also witnessed a significant rise during the Bush administration with US\$ 13,494.3 million in 2001 to US\$ 43,386.1 million in 2008.¹⁴⁵ The gradual rise of this Indo-U.S. merchandise trade during these eight years can be seen from the Table 5 which also shows the U.S. trade imbalance with India.

Table 5
India-U.S. Bilateral Merchandise Trade, 2001-2008
(in millions of U.S. dollars)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Exports to India	3,757.0	4101.0	4,979.7	6,109.4	7,918.6	9,673.6	14,968.8	17,682.1
Imports from India	9,737.3	11,818.4	13,055.3	15,572.0	18,804.2	21,830.8	24,073.3	25,704
Total Trade	13,494.3	15,919.4	18,035	21,681.4	26,722.8	31,504.4	39,042.1	43,386.1
Trade Balance	-5,980.3	-7,717.4	-8,075.6	9,462.7	-10,885.6	-12,157.3	-9,104.4	-8,022.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade, Available at <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5330.html> (Accessed on 10 November, 2015)

Besides, the total FDI equity inflow to India from the U.S. during the period April 2000-August 2009 was US\$ 7.44 billion accounting for 8% of total inflows into India during this period. In 2008, Indian companies invested around US\$ 8.5 billion in the U.S. market through M&Q, equity participation and other routes.¹⁴⁶ These economic ties added further momentum to the growing Indo-U.S. strategic cooperation. Thus, it is observed that the Indo-U.S. relations were altogether transformed into a strategic partnership during the Bush administration. In this regard, Ashley J. Tellis notes:

It is probable that when the history of George W. Bush administration is finally written, the transformation of the U.S.-Indian relationship will be judged as the President's greatest foreign policy achievement. This success, if sustained through wise policies and skilled diplomacy by future administrations, will portend enormous consequences for the future balance of power in Asia and globally to the advantage of the United States.¹⁴⁷

Similarly, Dana Parino, a Bush administration official remarked about the Indo-U.S. relations during the Bush administration that, "I think that India and U.S. relations have been exceedingly good during our administration. And I have no reason to expect that it won't continue when Barack Obama becomes President next Tuesday".¹⁴⁸

From the preceding analysis, it can be safely asserted that it was under the George W. Bush administration and especially in its second term, that the Indo-U.S. strategic

partnership gathered the real momentum and at the same time China began to emerge as a powerful factor in this evolving strategic partnership between India and the United States. However, both the U.S. and Indian officials maintained the view that their growing relations were not aimed or directed against any third country including China. But at the same time, Bush administration's inclination toward India, enhancing defense and trade ties, and above all, his decision to facilitate nuclear energy trade with India were widely interpreted as driven by the desire to make India as a counter-weight to a rising China. While both India and the U.S. negated this assertion, Robert Blackwill (a key architect of Bush's India policy) later revealed the centrality of China factor in growing Indo-U.S. relations. In this regard, he noted that, "President George W. Bush based his transformation of U.S.-India relations on the core strategic principle of democratic India as key factor in balancing the rise of Chinese power".¹⁴⁹ He also asserted that although this was not based on the concept of containment of China but without this China factor in the minds of Americans, "the Bush administration would not have negotiated the Civil Nuclear Agreement and the Congress would not have approved it".¹⁵⁰

On the other hand, New Delhi's growing intimacy with Washington created new strategic fears in Beijing which compelled her to devise new coercive diplomatic means to keep India in check. For example, a renowned Chinese analyst warned, "India has to and willing to ally with the U.S. so as not to lag further behind China. But it may not be necessarily willing to pay the price. Many Chinese are antipathic to closer India-U.S. relationship, especially when the two countries attempt to ally against China".¹⁵¹ Similarly, Cheng Ruisheng (former Chinese ambassador to India) made it clear that a close alignment with the U.S. and Japan would be very costly for India.¹⁵² Practically, in order to check India from getting too close to the United States, Beijing enhanced its arms supply to Pakistan and also boasted its strategic presence in other South Asian countries. Beijing also began to show more assertiveness on the Arunachal Pradesh issue and questioned India's claim on Kashmir by issuing separate stapled visas to Kashmiri residents. All these developments created renewed irritants in the Sino-Indian relations.

Obama Administration

The new U.S. administration under President Barack Obama indicated at the outset that his administration would continue Bush administration's policy of engaging India and even may deepen it. In this regard, Obama issued a statement in which he stated that "our rapidly growing and deepening friendship with India offer benefits to all the worlds' citizens" and that the people of India "should know that they have no better friend and partner than the people of United States".¹⁵³ Moreover, Mrs. Hillary Clinton, the Secretary of State in the Obama administration also confirmed that she would work to fulfill President Obama's commitment to "establish a true strategic partnership with India, increase our military cooperation, trade, and support democracies around the world".¹⁵⁴

However, in spite of such assurances from the Obama administration, the strategic community in India were worried that the new administration was not focusing on the Indo-U.S. relations with the same pace and strength as did the Bush Administration. It was also feared that the Obama administration's main focus would be to strengthen its relations with China at the cost of India. In this regard, the perception of an emerging U.S.-China 'G-2 partnership' led many Indian strategists to question whether President Obama believes (as President Bush clearly did) that India's rise to power is in the strategic interests of the United States.¹⁵⁵ It was also thought that Obama's treating of China as a responsible regional power and not as a long term competitor would ultimately purge China as a uniting factor in Indo-U.S. relations.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, in his West Point speech regarding the new Afghanistan strategy, Obama mentioned Pakistan more than 25 times while India did not crop-up even once. This omission of India reflected the United States' stark break with at least one prevailing theory about the role India might play in improving volatile condition in Afghanistan.¹⁵⁷ The Indian fears were further exacerbated when in February 2009, India was excluded from the list of countries that the U.S. Secretary of State toured during her first South Asia visit. However, to alleviate these Indian fears, Clinton visited India in July, 2009 and called India a "key partner". She institutionalized what is known as "Strategic Dialogue" between the two countries. The dialogue helped to review bilateral cooperation on regional and international issues and provided the road map for cooperation in priority areas identified by the two countries.

Thus, the Clinton's India visit in July, 2009 brought back the positive traction in the Indo-U.S. relations. This trend was further strengthened when in November 2009, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh paid a visit to the United States. It was the first visit hosted by the new U.S. President. On this occasion, the Prime Minister and the U.S. President launched a new phase in the Indo-U.S. relations, describing it as a "Global Strategic Partnership".¹⁵⁸ Moreover, their discussions covered the need to have an "open and inclusive architecture" for cooperation in Asia-Pacific region. Both governments also looked forward to the conclusion of a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT).¹⁵⁹ The discussions on BIT were in recognition of the growing economic cooperation between the two states which was thought to support the strategic partnership between the U.S. and India. However, the most important field on which the two sides held extensive talks was the defense field. In this field, the two governments agreed to continue pursuing mutually beneficial defense cooperation through the existing security dialogue, service level exchanges, defense exercises, and trade and technology transfer and to expedite necessary arrangements to facilitate these activities.¹⁶⁰

The Indo-U.S. strategic partnership was further solidified with the President Obama's India visit in November, 2010. The visit helped in creating a long term framework to elevate the strategic partnership to a qualitatively higher level. During the visit, the two countries agreed to engage and cooperate on developments in Afghanistan, East Asia, and Central Asia. Further, the two countries decided to lead global efforts for non-proliferation and universal non-discriminatory global nuclear disarmament. In this regard, the two countries signed MoU on cooperation in the Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership.¹⁶¹ The two sides also launched new initiatives for a shared international partnership for democracy and development. Besides, there was also a strong focus on economic cooperation with both the countries agreeing to take necessary steps, including reducing trade barriers and protectionist measures.¹⁶² President Obama's one of the most significant announcement during the visit was the endorsement of India's bid as a permanent member in a reformed UN Security Council. This U.S. endorsement was recognition by the Obama that India's role in global affairs is indispensable as he declared India an "emerged power".¹⁶³ Besides, the UN Security Council, Obama also

announced its support for India's membership in four multilateral export control regimes such as Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG), Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Wassenaar Arrangement and Australia Group. Moreover, in the Defense field, both nations finalized agreements at the tone of nearly US\$ 5 billion which included ten C-17 Globemaster III military transport aircraft and other hi-tech military equipments and hardware.¹⁶⁴

Thus, with the wide convergence of interests between the two countries as discussed above, Obama's India visit was widely considered as a successful visit by both India and the U.S. For instance, S.M. Krishna (External Affairs Minister) while discussing Obama's trip to India, stated that the "visit was successful in strengthening mutual understanding on regional and global issues, accelerated the momentum of bilateral cooperation, and creating a long-term framework to elevate the India-U.S. strategic partnership to new level".¹⁶⁵ Similarly, from the U.S. side, Assistant Secretary of State noted that the Obama's visit to India "will be remembered as a watershed, when the U.S. and India embark at a new level on concrete initiatives to build a global partnership".¹⁶⁶

The qualitatively transformed relationship between India and the U.S. and especially the defense cooperation and convergence on regional and global issues were perceived by China having long term repercussions for its interests. For instance, the United States offer to give India a role in Afghanistan, East Asia, and Central Asia was not a welcome development for China. It was an apparent move adopted by the U.S. to send a message to China that Indo-U.S. cooperation would be extended to other regional areas where China already has strong foothold. As Ashley J. Tellis noted, "Such as the commitment of the U.S. and India to cooperate in Afghanistan and Africa for the U.S., to have India as a partner in two very sensitive regions sends a signal to important countries like Pakistan and China".¹⁶⁷ Thus, China viewed this regional cooperation between India and the U.S. as the U.S. plan to encircle China and ultimately reduce its strategic influence in these vital regions. On other matters, especially on U.S. endorsement of India for the membership in elite groups such as UN Security Council, NSG, MTCR, etc. China did not show much criticism and instead adopted a neutral posture in this regard.

For example, China made a statement favoring "rational and necessary reform" of the UN Security Council and specifically mentioned India as part of that process. With regard to India's joining the NSG, MTCR, etc., the Chinese Foreign Ministry stated that under the precondition of abiding by international non-proliferation obligations, all countries have the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and in this regard international cooperation is important.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, China continues to see India and Pakistan differently when it comes to nuclear issues, preferring 'nuclear parity' between Delhi and Islamabad.¹⁶⁹ Although China did not make it clear that it would clearly support India's candidature as a permanent member in the UN Security Council in the near future, it was considered as one of the positive statement made by China about India till date.¹⁷⁰ It was an apparent move by China to improve its ties with India because at that time China was facing a number of Asian countries led by the United States against it incited by its own assertive actions. For example, with regard to India too, China's assertive posture can be seen from its opposition to Dr. Manmohan Singh's visit to Arunachal Pradesh in October, 2009¹⁷¹ when China said that it was "strongly dissatisfied" with the visit and demanded that India "address China's serious concerns and not trigger a disturbance" in its relations with China. In the same year China also attempted to block a US\$ 60 million Asian Development Bank flood management program which was meant for Arunachal Pradesh.¹⁷² These assertive moves by China against India has compelled the latter to lean more towards the United States. Therefore, to reduce these cynical affects on its policies towards its neighbors, China thought it against its interests to criticize or object each and every development in the Indo-U.S. relations.

The Indo-U.S. Defense Policy Group (DPG) which has played an important role in promoting the defense and military cooperation between the two states held its 11th meeting in Washington in March, 2011. This meeting laid more stress on counter-terrorism cooperation, maritime security, and disaster relief. It was decided to continue consultations on maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) in existing forums such as DPG and its appropriate sub-groups.¹⁷³ The U.S. defense sales to India also saw a spectacular rise which reached a total value of over US\$ 9 billion from

2000-2010.¹⁷⁴ The major U.S. defense sales to India since 2006 are given below in Table 6.

Table 6.
Major U.S. Defense Sales to India Since 2006

Weapon Designation	Weapon Description	No. Ordered	Price/Sale route	Year(s) of Deliveries
AN/TPQ-37 Firefinder	Arty locating radar	8	Part of \$142-190 million deal; FMS	2006
AN/TPQ-37 Firefinder	Arty locating radar	4	Part of \$142-190 million deal; FMS	2006-2007
LM-2500	Gas turbine for 1 Vikrant (IAC or Project-71) aircraft carrier produced in India	4	N/A	N/A
F404	Turbofan for Tejas (LCA) combat aircraft produced in India	17	\$105 million	N/A
Austin	AALS (Ex-USS Trenton – Indian designation INS Jalashwa)	1	\$48 million; FMS	2007
S-61/H-3A Sea King	Helicopter	6	\$39 million; FMS	2007
C-130J-30 Hercules	Transport aircraft (for Indian special forces)	6	\$962 million	2010-11 (ahead of schedule)
CBU-97 SFW	Guided bomb	512	\$258 million	N/A
RGM-84L Harpoon-2	Anti-ship MI/SSM	20	\$170 million; FMS	N/A
C-130J-30 Hercules	Transport aircraft (for Indian special forces)	6	Approx. \$1 billion; FMS	N/A
C-17A Globemaster-3	Transport aircraft	10	\$4.1 billion	2013-2014/15
Mk-54 MAKO	ASW torpedo (for Boeing P8-I)	32	\$86 m deal	Contract not yet signed
P-8A Poseidon (P8-I version)	ASW aircraft	8	\$2 billion deal (offsets 30% incl); FMS	By 2015
F414	Turbofan (for Tejas (LCA) combat aircraft produced in India)	99	\$800 million	N/A
BAE Systems M777 155 mm/39 caliber Lightweight howitzers (LWH)	Artillery (for Indian Army)	145	\$647 million; FMS	Contract expected to be signed by 2013
Boeing AH-64D Apache Longbow	Attack helicopters incl. Ordnance in the form of 812 AGM-114L-3 Longbow Hellfire and 542 AGM-114R-3 Hellfire II air-to-surface missiles and 245 Stinger Block I-92H air-to-air missiles	22	\$1.2 billion	Contract not yet signed
Boeing CH-47F Chinook	Heavy lift helicopters	15	NA; FMS	MOD set to open price negotiations

Source: K. Alan Kronstadt and Sonia Pinto, *India-U.S. Security Relations: Current Engagement*, CRS Report for Congress, Washington, D.C., 13 November, 2012, pp.19-20.

The Indo-U.S. strategic cooperation was further boasted when the U.S Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited New Delhi on 19 July, 2011 to co-chair the second meeting of the Strategic Dialogue with External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna. The two leaders discussed the progress made in the bilateral relations so far and agreed to initiate new objectives for strengthening the Indo-U.S. Global Strategic Partnership. They also revived the cooperation in the fields of defense, science and technology, intelligence and counter terrorism including cyber security, agriculture, energy, and trade and investments.¹⁷⁵ In one of her speech at Chennai, Mrs. Clinton laid out the Obama administration's vision for the future relations in which India was supposed to play a growing role in the Asia-Pacific, Central and South Asia. On the former, which was seen as veiled expression of concern about China rise, she sought India's close cooperation in seeing formation of regional architecture that adopts "international norms and security, trade, rule of law, human rights and accountable governance".¹⁷⁶ In this respect, she welcomed New Delhi's "Look East" policy of closer engagement with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries.

China has been closely monitoring the Indo-US strategic cooperation. The increasing defense cooperation, joint military exercise and the increasing transfer of military hardware and other technologies by the United States to India has been viewed in China as a way to put more pressure on China and therefore, restrict its increasing power and influence. On Indo-U.S. cooperation in Asia-Pacific region and other maritime areas, *The China Post* commented that Clinton during her visit to India urged India to expand its influence eastward, towards China's backyard in South East Asia and the Pacific Rim as well as engagement in Central Asia, on China's Western flank. In China's view, the fostering of Indo-U.S. security alliances in those regions and in others areas, would yield immense impact on China's security environment.¹⁷⁷ *The China Post* further argued that by enhancing and diversifying their cooperation in those areas, India and the U.S. have been seeking a joint approach to curb the emergence of China on world map as a global power.¹⁷⁸ One Chinese scholar Zhang Guihong said that both the U.S. and India had seen China as a threat to their regional and global interests respectively. Moreover, he noted that the U.S. strategy of containment of China had been increasingly developed as a

factor influencing America's Asia-Pacific strategy in which the U.S. is enlisting other regional states including India on its side against China. China also expressed apprehensions about the growing counter-terrorism cooperation between India and the United States as it thought that the latter would not hesitate to use this military strategy in the Asia-Pacific and in the Indian Ocean region (in collaboration with India) against China.¹⁷⁹ Meanwhile, Chinese indignation towards India's growing military ties and deepening maritime cooperation with the United States can be seen in the Depsang incident of 15 April, 2013 in which Chinese troops intruded into the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and remained in occupation of the territory for about three weeks.¹⁸⁰ This incident not only increased the security dilemma between New Delhi and Beijing but also widened the strategic gulf between the two countries.

However, in spite of these Chinese apprehensions, India and the United States continued to maintain the highest level of political visits and exchanges. In this regard, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Washington from 26-30 September, 2013 where he held third summit level meeting with the U.S President Barack Obama. The two leaders expressed satisfaction over the transformation of the India-U.S. relationship over the past years and agreed that the strategic partnership was set to further intensify in the future.¹⁸¹ The Joint Statement issued at the end of summit clearly reflects the growing strategic partnership between the two countries. In this Statement the two leaders expressed the convergence of interests between the U.S.' rebalancing policy and India's Look East policy when the two leaders expressed the desire, "to partner more closely with other Asia-Pacific countries including greater coordination with Japan, China, and ASEAN, among others, including through the evolving institutional architecture of the region".¹⁸² Building on ongoing consultations between the United States and India on East Asia and the trilateral dialogue mechanisms with Afghanistan and Japan respectively, the two leaders agreed to "expand their consultations to include dialogue on the Indian Ocean Region, deepen coordination on cross cutting issues including maritime security".¹⁸³ The two leaders resolved to cooperate with each other on the stability on Afghanistan and the Iranian nuclear issue. On the Afghanistan issue, the two leaders noted that, "both will remain committed to contribute to peace and stability in

Afghanistan during the critical transformation of decade (2015-2025)".¹⁸⁴ In addition to it, the Joint Statement also noted the convergence of interests in solving the Syrian problem, proliferation of nuclear weapons, U.S. endorsement of India's UN Security Council membership and defense cooperation.

Thus the above mentioned Joint Statement reflects that there has been enhancing convergence of interests between the U.S. and India on various global, regional and bilateral issues. For instance, India has always been hesitant in claiming that it endorsed the U.S. strategy of rebalancing in the Asia-Pacific region, but the Joint Statement for the first time, publicly declared a convergence between the U.S. rebalance to Asia and India's 'Look East' policy and expressed the desire to partner more closely with other Asia-Pacific countries, including greater coordination with Japan.¹⁸⁵ One of the unnamed shared challenges between India and the U.S. has been China's rise and its assertiveness. There are approximately 32 Indo-U.S. discussion groups institutionalized for mutual consultations on various aspects of their shared concerns. These consultations also cover "East Asia, Central Asia and West Asia. In the Joint Statement, it was resolved that such consultations should also be extended to Indian Ocean. In the Indian Ocean Region, the U.S. wants India to emerge as major security provider.¹⁸⁶

Joint Declaration on Principles for Defense Cooperation

Moreover, to enhance and upgrade Indo-U.S. defense cooperation, a separate declaration entitled "Joint Declaration on Principles for Defense Cooperation" was issued during Singh's visit to the U.S.. Through this declaration, the United States agreed to treat India on par with its "closest partners" like United Kingdom and Japan in terms of technology transfer and defense cooperation.¹⁸⁷ For fulfilling this vision of treating India like her closest partners, the Declaration on Defense Cooperation laid down the following principles:

- I. The United States and India share common security interests and place each other at the same level as their closest partners. This principle will apply with respect to defense technology transfer, trade, research, co-development and coproduction,

for defense articles and services including the most advanced and sophisticated technology.

- II. The U.S. continues to fully support India's full membership in the four international export control regimes, which would further facilitate technology sharing.
- III. The two sides will continue their efforts to strength their mutual understanding of their respective procurement systems and approval processes.
- IV. The two sides look forward to identification of specific opportunities for cooperative and collaborative projects in advanced defense technologies and systems within the next year.¹⁸⁸

Thus with the signing of this declaration and elevating India's status as United States' closest defense partner, Obama administration demonstrated that India would continue to be the important partner to the U.S. for sharing the regional and global responsibilities. However, China maintained that the U.S. is cultivating China's neighbors including Japan and now India, to hedge against China in the region. As one authoritative Chinese daily noted, "China is in a crescent-shaped ring of encirclement. The ring brings in Japan, stretches through nations in the South-China Sea to India, and ends in Afghanistan." Furthermore, China's unease and discomfort at U.S. efforts to put in place an anti-China alliance aimed at containing China was also reflected in other Chinese media commentaries. For example, one of the leading Chinese Journal wrote, "What is particularly unbearable is how the U.S. blatantly encourages China's neighboring countries to go against China".¹⁸⁹ Expecting these Chinese apprehensions regarding the developments in the Indo-U.S. relations and particularly after signing the Defense Cooperation Declaration with India, Obama while assuring China said that, "no, it is not about China... it is about ensuring the peace and stability that the Asia-Pacific has enjoyed for over 60 years and ensuring that it continues.....We also seek to strengthen and grow our military-to-military relationship with China".¹⁹⁰

In addition to strategic and defense cooperation, the Indo-U.S. relations also witnessed a spectacular rise in bilateral trade and investment. There was a gradual rise in bilateral merchandise trade between India and the United States from 2009 to 2013 as

shown in Table 7. Official U.S. trade data reports total trade with India increased 69.2% between 2009 and 2013, and according to USITC (United States International Trade Commission), India was the eighteenth largest export market for U.S. goods in 2013, and the tenth largest source of U.S. merchandise imports.¹⁹¹

Table 7.
India-U.S. Bilateral Merchandise Trade, 2009-2013
(in billions of U.S. dollars)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Exports to India	16.462	19.223	21.628	22.336	21.842
Imports from India	21.176	29.531	36.167	40.518	41.845
Total Trade	37.638	48.754	57.795	62.854	63.687
Trade Balance	-4.714	-10.308	-14.540	-18.183	-20.003

Source: Michael F. Martin, et.al., *India-U.S. Economic Relations: In Brief*, CRS Report for Congress, Washington, D.C., 26 September, 2014, p.3.

Thus as shown in the above Table, the bilateral trade between India and the U.S. reached US\$ 63.7 billion in 2013, registering a growth of about 1.7 percent over the previous year. Indian exports accounted for US\$ 41.8 billion; whereas, U.S. exports stood at US\$ 21.9 billion. Moreover, India-U.S. bilateral merchandise trade during the first ten months of 2014 amounted to US\$ 55.86 billion with a trade surplus of US\$20.97 million in favor of India. During the year 2012 bilateral trade in services totaled US\$ 58.76 billion, of which U.S exports of services to India amounted to US\$ 30.17 billion and India's exports of services to the U.S. added up to US\$ 28.59 billion.¹⁹² As per Indian official statistics, the cumulative FDI inflows from the U.S. from April 2000 to September 2014 amounted to about US\$ 13.19 billion constituting nearly 6 percent of the total FDI and thereby making the U.S. sixth largest source of FDI into India.¹⁹³ These increasing economic links between the U.S. and India is supposed to further boost the defense and strategic cooperation between the two countries. For this purpose, there are several dialogue mechanisms to strengthen bilateral engagement on economic and trade issues, including a Ministerial level Economic and Financial Partnership and a Ministerial Trade Policy Forum.

Evolving Dynamics in Indo-U.S. Strategic Partnership

In May 2014, an important development occurred in the Indian politics when the Congress led UPA-II government was replaced by BJP led NDA government under the Prime Ministership of Narendra Modi. This development was important because after a long period of coalition governments, there was a strong government at the national level in India. It was perceived that Modi government will open new avenues for restoring the momentum in the evolving strategic partnership between the Washington and New Delhi. However, in spite of these positive developments, there were also some issues which were thought to cast negative influence on Indo-U.S. relations. For example, initially there was apprehension regarding the direction that U.S.-India ties would assume given the fact that Narendra Modi was denied a visa¹⁹⁴ by the United States for a long time for his alleged role in the 2002 Gujarat communal riots.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, differences over rigid visa rules for Indians, the issues relating to IPRs, contradictory stands in the WTO, Khobragade issue and the U.S. refusal to extradite David Coleman Headly to India has created strains in the bilateral relationship even before Modi assumed the office of Prime Ministership. However, these apprehensions soon began to vanish with the high level visits by the U.S. officials to India. Important among them were the visits by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ms. Penny Pritzker in July, 2014 for the fifth round of Indo-U.S. Strategic Dialogue and by the U.S. Secretary of Defense Mr. Chuck Hagel in August, 2014.¹⁹⁶ In India, Secretary Hagel proposed a number of initiatives for India with regard to transfer of technology and co-production of defense items. Hagel also assured the Indian leadership that the U.S. would always respect India's desire for strategic autonomy.¹⁹⁷

However, the most important and strong incentive which led to rapid upward trajectory in the Indo-U.S. relations within a few months after the new government came to power in India, was the convergence of interests and sharing of apprehensions between India and the United States regarding China as it has begun to show more assertiveness in its foreign policy. Moreover, while the previous government had sometimes distanced itself from the U.S. citing "strategic autonomy" and "non-alignment", the new government under the leadership of Modi has been more assertive in showing its

resentment against various Chinese actions.¹⁹⁸ For example, even during the election campaign, Modi while addressing a rally in Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh asked China to shed its "expansionist mindset" and "forge bilateral ties with India for peace and prosperity of both the nations".¹⁹⁹ After coming into power, Modi government has crafted a strategy wherein it has sought to delink economic cooperation from political issues with China. Thus, while continuing to promote and maintain constructive economic and trade relations, it has not hesitated to show its resentment over various Chinese "expansionist" policies.²⁰⁰ This development and strategy adopted by the new government in India has brought the United States strategically even more closer to India than in the past. This trend can further be seen from the Prime Minister Modi's visit to the United States in September, 2014 which further expanded the rhetoric and the substance of Indo-U.S. strategic partnership. This visit succeeded in aligning the India-U.S. partnership firmly behind India's developmental needs, global aspirations and went to focus on concrete outcomes covering all key priority areas of the government.²⁰¹ In this direction, both the sides decided to renew and extend for 10 years the 2005 Defense Cooperation Agreement.²⁰² The two sides also set a target to increase bilateral trade in goods & services to \$500 billion.²⁰³

The Joint Statement issued on 30 September, 2014 during Prime Minister Modi's visit to the U.S. noted that the strategic cooperation between India and the U.S. is so strong that it has not changed even after the change of governments in both the countries. On defense cooperation, the two leaders reaffirmed that both the countries would "build an enduring partnership in which both the sides treat each other at the same level as their closest partner".²⁰⁴ Obama also expressed his intention to "support India's phased entry into the NSG, MTCR, the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australian Group". Noting India's "Act-East" policy and the United States rebalance to Asia, the two leaders "committed to work more closely with other Asia-Pacific countries" and also underlined the "importance of their trilateral dialogue with Japan and decided to explore holding of this dialogue among their foreign ministers".²⁰⁵ It was also emphasized to accelerate the infrastructure connectivity and economic development corridors for regional economic integration linking South, South East and Central Asia. In this regard, Obama reiterated

that the "United States, through its New Silk Road and Asia-Pacific Economic Corridor, is promoting the linkage of India with the wider region to enable a free flow of commerce and energy".²⁰⁶ Both the leaders also expressed the concern about the rising tensions over maritime territorial disputes in the Asia-Pacific and therefore, "affirmed the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea".²⁰⁷

The Chinese political and diplomatic establishment closely watched Modi's first visit to the U.S. as a Prime Minister because they also came to realize that the new Indian leadership would have slightly a different approach in its dealings with China and the United States. For China, it was now easy for the United States to enlist India on its side as a part of a larger containment strategy against China because the strategic apprehension between the two largest democracies regarding China was assuming new dimensions. In this context, China was cautiously observing the increasing defense partnership between India and the U.S. on the one hand, and plan to advance the India-U.S.-Japan trilateral dialogue to the level of foreign ministers, as stated in the Joint Statement on the other hand.²⁰⁸ Moreover, much to the discomfort of Beijing, India's 'Act East Policy' and the U.S. rebalancing to Asia were mentioned in the Joint Statement, where both find convergence of interests in promoting peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. The first ever reference to South China Sea in the above stated Indo-U.S. Joint Statement was predictably not welcome development as far as China was concerned. China expressed its resentment over the reference of South China in the Indo-U.S. Joint statement. In this regard, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei vehemently asserted that, "our position is that the dispute in South China Sea should be resolved by countries directly concerned through negotiations and consultations. Any third party should not be involved to this".²⁰⁹

Obama's Historic Visit to India, January 2015

In the first month of the 2015, India and the United States indicated that their bilateral relationship would continue to evolve towards a more strong strategic partnership when President Obama paid a visit to India from 25-27 January as a chief guest at India's 66th

Republic Day celebrations. Obama became the first U.S. President who visited India twice in his tenure as the U.S. President and also the first U.S. President who witnessed the Republic Day celebrations as a Guest of Honor.²¹⁰ It was a historic visit in the sense that it led to a qualitative reinvigoration in the strategic partnership between the United States and India. On 25 January, 2015 a Joint Statement - *Sanjha Prayas Sabka Vikas*: "Shared Effort Progress for All" was issued by the President Obama and Prime Minister Modi. It was more or less the reaffirmation of the Joint Statement which was issued when Modi visited the U.S. in September, 2014. Just like the September, 2014 Joint Statement, it also noted that, "India's Act East Policy and the United States rebalance in Asia provide opportunities for India, the United States and other Asia-Pacific countries to work closely to strengthen regional ties".²¹¹ In matters relating to defense trade and cooperation, the Joint Statement emphasized the "ongoing importance of Defense Technology and Trade Initiatives (DTTI) in developing new areas of cooperation, including through co-development and co-production".²¹² The mention of DTTI in the Joint Statement is thought to increase co-production and co-development of military hardware in India in partnership with the United States. This initiative is in consonance with the Modi government's "Make in India" policy to increase the share of India's military hardware that is manufactured in India and thereby make India self-reliant in defense sector.²¹³ Moreover, noting the discussions in the sixth round of India-U.S.-Japan Trilateral Dialogue, the two leaders "underlined the importance of the cooperation between the three countries through identification of projects of common interests and their early implementation, and they decided to explore holding the dialogue among their Foreign Ministries".²¹⁴ The Joint Statement also mentioned the Indo-U.S. cooperation relating to Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. Obama also reaffirmed his support for India in the UN Security Council and other important bodies like MTCR, NSG, etc. It was also agreed to strengthen their broad based partnership for development through trade, manufacturing, and investment linkages.²¹⁵

Besides the Joint Statement, there were two other Declarations which were issued during Obama's trip to India in January, 2015. These were "U.S.-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region" and the "India-U.S. Delhi

Declaration of Friendship". The Vision Statement on Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region was one of the most important and boldest Joint Declaration between the U.S. and India which was directly related to China. While stating that a closer partnership between the U.S. and India was indispensable to promote peace, prosperity, and stability in the two important regions, the Declaration affirmed the importance of "safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, especially in South China Sea, called on all Parties to avoid the threat or use of force, and pursue the resolution of territorial and maritime disputes through all means, in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law".²¹⁶ The Declaration also stated that "over the next five years, the two sides will strengthen their regional dialogues; invest in making trilateral consultations with third countries in the region more robust; deepen regional integration; strengthen regional forums; and explore additional multilateral opportunities for engagement".²¹⁷ According to Brahma Challeney, the Joint Statement on Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region is based upon the important Indo-U.S. convergence relating to the threat posed by stronger China because according to them China is using force to change the territorial status-quo with an aim to develop a China-centric regional order. He further adds that, "the statement lays-out the intent of the U.S. and India to develop a road map to address the new challenges in the Asia-Pacific, including by strengthening trilateral consultations with third countries in the region. In other words, the two will work to develop a concert of democracies to prevent power disequilibrium".²¹⁸ Earlier during his visit to Japan, Prime Minister Modi has also made a veiled attack on China for intruding upon the maritime areas of other neighbors. In this regard he said that, "we have to decide if we want to have '*vikas vaad*' (development) or '*vistar vaad*' (expansionism) which leads to disintegration. Those who follow the path of Buddha and have faith on '*vikas vaad*', they develop. But we see, those having ideas of the 18th century, engage in encroachments and enter seas (of others)".²¹⁹

The third declaration entailed "India-U.S. Delhi Declaration of Friendship", was also equally important in the direction of strengthening strategic partnership between India and the U.S. Through this declaration, the two sides agreed to elevate Strategic

Dialogue to a Strategic and Commercial Dialogue, establish secure hotlines between the Prime Minister of India and the President of United States, and between National Security Advisors; cooperate to develop joint ventures on strategically significant projects and build effective counter-terrorism cooperation.²²⁰

While India and the United States attached a significant importance to Obama's India visit in furthering and advancing their strategic partnership through agreements, speeches, and declarations, China viewed it as superficial rapprochement. For instance, China's official *Xinhua* news agency in its commentary on Obama's visit to India commented that "the shortened three day visit is more symbolic than pragmatic, given the long standing division between the two giants, which may be as huge as the distance between them".²²¹ In another commentary on Obama's trip to India by *Xinhua* quoted in *The Times of India*, noted that, "Washington and New Delhi have long been engaged in a complicated dance since 2008. India and the U.S. differ on nuclear cooperation, climate change, and Trade Facilitation Agreement. With such a long list of differences on the table, Obama will face a hard job to have his Indian friends on the same page".²²² The commentary further added, "he needs this trip to tell the Capitol Hill and his supporters that his administration can make progress on important relations. More frankly, he needs India to side with them".²²³ Other Chinese media commentary cautioned India of getting too closer to the U.S. For example, one media commentary went on by stating that India and China "must not fall into trap of rivalry set by the West". It further added:

The West is engaging India on to be fully prepared for "threats" posed by its large neighbor. Considering the fact that both sides still have territorial disputes and will probably have wider engagement at many levels, this so-called rivalry between India and China will not stop making headlines in Western media. However, a trap is a trap. Although craftily set, it will be revealed eventually".²²⁴

In this commentary, it is clearly reflected that it is directed more towards the West than India. The rationale for this relatively more criticism to the West than to India was given by Michael Kugelman (Senior Program Associate for South and Southeast Asia at Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars) by noting that, "the Chinese could be extremely concerned about India and the United States moving closer together, but given

that (Prime Minister) Modi has been so explicit in his support for China... I think that China knows that India would not want to do anything that would be seen as provocative toward China."²²⁵ Moreover, China was trying to play the anti-West, Asian solidarity, or the "Third World" card to wean India away from the United States.

On the other side, Pakistan an all-weather friend of China and an arch enemy of India was also highly apprehensive of Obama's trip to India. In its editorial titled "Obama's Progress", *New International* (a Pakistani newspaper) described the U.S. President's decision to not visit Pakistan as an "implicit snub".²²⁶ It further added that:

India is currently in a battle with China to be the primary regional power and any signs that the U.S. is decisively shifting toward it will not be taken too well in Beijing. For Pakistan, the worry may be that greater economic cooperation will automatically be followed by further political cooperation, leading Pakistan in the cold.²²⁷

However, the most important development which increased China's security apprehensions was the Indo-U.S. Vision Statement on the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean. On this important Vision Statement, China's state run *Global Times*, noted that, "the U.S., regardless of historical complications, is putting more efforts into soliciting India to act as partner, even an ally, to support Washington's 'pivot to Asia' strategy which is mainly devised to counter China's rise".²²⁸ According to the Chinese officials, the declaration highlights the close strategies between India and the United States, a relationship that can balance the growing strategic presence of China in the greater Indian Ocean. Pakistani media also expressed its apprehensions by claiming that America was trying to establish India's dominance in South Asia. In this regard, Pakistan's Foreign Office issued an official statement complaining that an India-U.S. partnership would alter South Asia's "balance of power" and create "regional imbalance".²²⁹ In the backdrop of Obama's visit to India and the growing strategic partnership between the two, China intensified its relations with Pakistan in an apparent move to warn India for getting too close to the United States. When Obama was still in India, Pakistan's Army Chief General Raheel Shareef visited China where Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told him that Pakistan was China's "irreplaceable all weather friend" and that they shared "common destiny".²³⁰

China also indicated that it would support India's NSG membership conditionally and said that in this regard what is needed to be exercised is "prudence and caution".²³¹

In response to these apprehensions expressed by China at the Obama's visit to India, the U.S. President Obama said that there is no reason for Beijing or for Islamabad to be worried about the good relationship between India and the United States. Although, he said that China's peaceful rise is in the best interests of the United States, but at the same time asserted that, "China's rise should not be at the expense of other folks. It should not bully small countries like Vietnam or Philippines around maritime issues, but try to resolve those issues peacefully in accordance with the international law. It should not manipulate its currencies to get itself trading advantages that others don't have".²³² On Indo-U.S. strategic partnership Obama said:

There is no doubt that there are aspects of India that make U.S. closer to India. Specially, it is a democracy and it reflects the values and aspirations of our country in a way that China could not. And so that I think there is an affinity there that I feel personally and I think the American people feel as well.²³³

Conclusion

After a detailed examination and analysis of the Indo-U.S. relations in the post-Cold War period, it can be explicitly observed that the relationship has moved from estrangement to a strategic partnership and is still evolving in this direction. This strategic partnership as observed in the preceding discussions has not been a sudden development but the result of a gradual convergence of interests and shared values between the two countries. These shared values and interests as claimed by the two countries include peace and stability in South Asia, securing vital sea lanes of communication, defeating regional and global terrorism, promoting democratic values and rule of law, enhancing global economic growth, checking the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and above all to prevent any regional power (mainly China) to dominate the region. In India both the BJP led NDA governments and the Congress led UPA governments have overseen and supported the growth of Indo-U.S. strategic partnership. In the United States also, both

the Republicans and the Democrats alike have supported this positive trend in Indo-U.S. relations through various agreements, high level official visits, and statements.

From the U.S perspective, the world is rapidly emerging towards a multipolar system in which the U.S. power and influence is relatively decreasing which in turn has made it difficult for her to achieve its international goals alone. In such a complex situation, the rapid rise of China if not managed successfully, will eventually alter the global balance of power and institutions in ways that are not in commensurate with the U.S. interests and values. Therefore, the U.S. is playing a vital role to cultivate India as its lever to realize its goal that has become fundamental to its Asian strategy i.e., to remain firmly embedded in Asia at a time when the continent is emerging as the world's new centre of gravity and where China is emerging as a formidable challenge to the U.S. interests. In this context, India's vital position in South Asia, its strategic position between Western Asia and South East Asia, its defense capabilities including nuclear weapons and increasing blue water navy and above all its emergence as a rival economic power to China, gives it an influential place in global politics and in the American security calculus. The possible "India Card" was also recently highlighted in a classified report by the U.S. Defense Department entitled 'Indo-U.S. Military Relationship: Expectations and Perceptions',²³⁴ which argued for the "strategic engagement" with India in order to counter-balance growing Chinese power, and perhaps a key player in the future U.S. containment policy of China. Finally, in the Asian region as a whole, the U.S. will benefit from a stronger India that is emerging as a partner in shaping a regional order compatible with the U.S. interests and values.

For India, the main incentive of coming closer to the United States vis-a-vis China is that despite the improvement in its relations with latter over the past two decades, the fundamental contradictions between the two are too deep to permit any kind of 'strategic partnership'. Apart from discord over the border issues and Pakistan factor, different perceptions on establishing a favorable world order, the perennial competition for power and influence in Asia and beyond are other factors that forbade India and China to have a smooth relationship devoid of mutual suspicion and distress. Thus, in the context of the above mentioned complex type of relationship between China and India which is mostly

characterized by mutual suspicion and a relative strength of China vis-a-vis India, the strategic partnership with the United States appears to be in the best interests of India. For instance, the Annual Report of the Ministry of Defense of India (2014-2015) stated that "India remains conscious and watchful of the implications of China's increasing military profile in our immediate neighborhood as well as the development of strategic infrastructure by China in the border areas. It's footprints in India's immediate neighborhood has also been increasing as a result of its proactive diplomacy through political, military and economic engagement". It is this threat perception as emanating from China that propels India to deepen strategic partnership with the United States. By this strategic partnership with the United States, India benefits to secure the U.S. support by playing "China card", or at least U.S. understanding for strengthening India's pre-eminent position in the South Asia-Indian Ocean Region via joint naval exercises, and military drills, training in modern warfare and through transfer of advanced military and defense technologies. Strong U.S. support for India would also manifest in economic areas such as access to the U.S. market, U.S. investment in India, etc. Thus it is observed that the Indo-U.S. strategic cooperation are overtly competitive and solely directed at China. Although, neither India nor the United States seeks confrontation or containment of a rising China, but at the same time both wish to ensure a *defacto* balance of power and influence in the region compatible with their interests. Nevertheless, it can be still asserted that Indo-U.S. strategic relations and convergence of interests have great implications on Chinese security calculus.

Since the end of the Cold War, China has always perceived that the United States from the Clinton to Obama administrations have sought to play the balance of power game in Asia in order to contain China. The growing strategic partnership with India is thought to be the part of this U.S. grand strategy to make New Delhi as a counter-weight to Beijing. Thus, China is concerned much about the U.S. attempts to contain it and the profound effect on its security of an eventual integration of India into a U.S. alliance system. To deal with this eventuality, China's has adopted two pronged strategy, vis., (i) promoting good and cooperative relations with both India and the U.S. and at the same time, (b) taken some measures to deal with any potential threat as emerging either from

the United States or India or from the both. In the latter case, it has enhanced its manifold activities in India's neighborhood by assisting Pakistan's nuclear and missile development programs, deployed powerful military forces and strategic infrastructure development along the Sino-Indian border, enhanced its strategic presence in India's backyard especially in Burma, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. The main objective of these moves has been to persuade/check India from getting too closer to the U.S. However, these moves by China in turn have further increased the Indian apprehensions about China which has further widened their strategic gulf and deepened their strategic rivalry. In this backdrop, it can be concluded that the U.S. acts as a strong factor in Sino-Indian relations and the growing intimacy between India and the U.S. has created new apprehensions and dilemmas for China.

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Chapter-V

Emerging Multipolar World Order and the U.S.-China-India Triangular Dynamics

Introduction

In the immediate aftermath of the end of Cold War, Francis Fukuyama in his celebrated work *The End of History and the Last Man* declared that the United States' combination of free-market capitalism and liberal democracy had triumphed over rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism and communism.¹ This was followed by President George Bush's (senior) announcement that the United States was constructing a "New World Order."² Since then, the United States have enjoyed an unprecedented power and influence and was able to secure a unipolar system for almost two decades. However, in the second decade of the 21st century, the U.S dominated unipolar world is rapidly eroding due to the relative decline of U.S. influence and the emergence of new multiple power centers.³ The U.S.' protracted and unproductive military adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan coupled with economic recession originating from the U.S. demonstrated not only the declining American power, but also discredited the 'Washington Consensus'.⁴ This volatile situation in the West was further complicated with turmoil in the Euro-Zone in 2011 which pushed the world's second most important market into gripping crisis, depriving the world an alternative source of growth and dynamism. On the other hand, the rise of several large developing countries such as China, India, Russia, Brazil and other non-Western countries have been an important phenomenon. The development of these counties is characterized by positive economic growth, thriving populations, growing military prowess and expanding domestic markets which is thought to serve as "the engine of growth" for the world economy that has been ragged by the economic problems in the Europe and the United States.⁵ Among these developing and emerging countries, the ascendance of China and India has been most prominent and of epic importance. With their phenomenal economic growth and development, it is widely asserted that the single largest concentration of global economic power will be neither in Europe nor in the America, but in Asia. Various European and U.S. scholars of

geopolitics have called this shift the "Post Vasco da Gama Era" and "the End of Atlantic Era".⁶ It is in this backdrop that the relationship between these two Asian giants will be a defining feature in this new emerging multipolar world order. It is due to the fact that in spite of their growing economic relations and cooperation on various international issues, security competition between these two Asian powers has not vanished altogether.⁷ The broad spectrum of existing/emerging issues between these two states are border dispute, Pakistan factor, establishing nuclear deterrence and political and economic influence in Asia and other parts of the world. On the other side, though the U.S.' power and influence is relatively decreasing, it still remains the formidable military and economic powerhouse with significant global reach. This deep geopolitical rivalry between India and China, combined with the expanded influence of the United States, makes the U.S. support of one Asian rival against the other an extremely important strategic factor. The new processes and strategies adopted by these three countries adds further impetus to this dynamic process. For example, the American 'Rebalancing/Pivot' Strategy towards Asia-Pacific and the conclusion of 'Trans-Pacific Partnership' (TPP); China's initiation of the 'One Belt One Road (OBOR)', 'Asia-Pacific Free Trade Area' (FTAAP), establishment of Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and BRICS New Development Bank; and India's 'Act East Policy', 'Make in India', etc. are trying to adopt amidst various geopolitical pulls and pushes, which at times has heightened tension in the region.⁸ Moreover, as China views the growing Indo-U.S. strategic partnership with suspicion, New Delhi and Washington share common perceptions about the uncertainty surrounding Beijing's evaluation as a new global power. However, at the same time, China and India have been moving ahead with cooperation in multiple fields, including robust economic and trade ties, and supporting the emergence of multipolar world order vis-a-vis the United States. It is in this context that this triangle represents a very complex set of correlations and linkages. A combination of cooperation, competition and conflict have surrounded this triangle since the end of Cold War.⁹ In such a complex situation, it is very difficult to predict any clear-cut nature of triangular relationship among these three states. However, while discussing the nature of triangular relationship between the U.S., China and Japan, Harry Harding laid out the following questions which can be asked

about the India-China-U.S. strategic triangle. Harding laid-out the following questions about the future of strategic triangle between China-Japan and the United States:

Will it be a concert of powers, in which the three great nations share enough common values and common interests to work together to promote peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region? Will it be a firm alliance of two against one - an alignment in which the United States and Japan work together to contain the expansion of Chinese power? Will it be a balance of power, in which Japan tries to mediate a 'new Cold War' between China and the United States? Conversely, will the United States attempt to mediate an emerging rivalry between China and Japan in Asia? Or will the triangle be highly fluid, with each pair of countries working together on some issues, but finding themselves in disagreements on others, without forming any firm or enduring alignment?¹⁰

These questions which Harding raised about the nature of strategic triangle between the United States, China and Japan during the Cold War period, seems quite relevant in the 21st century with regard to strategic triangle between the United States, India and China. Therefore, an attempt has been made in this chapter to analyze and answer each of these questions and then predict the nature of triangular relationship between these three countries. But before analyzing these questions in the triangular perspective, a brief theoretical overview of triangular relations or strategic triangle in international relations becomes necessary here.

The Study of Strategic Triangles in International Relations

The concept of strategic triangle refers to a situation in which three major powers are so important to each other that a change in the relationship between any two of them has a significant impact on the interests of the third. The greater that impact, actual or potential, the greater is the significance of triangular relationship.¹¹ This concept was developed by Lowell Dittmer and Gerald Segal in the early 1980s by describing the triangular relationship between the United States, Soviet Union and China.¹² According to Robert S. Ross the triangular relations among these powers were distinguished by a significant degree of strategic interdependence, and the security of each state was significantly shaped by the nature of the relationship between the other two.¹³ Thus it was widely

accepted that the interactions among the U.S., China and Soviet Union were comprehended and defined in triangular terms in the Cold War era. However, the end of Cold War did not mark the end of triangular politics. Eventually, Asia once again settled into a strategic triangle involving the U.S. China and India. As it is propounded by Lowell Dittmer, the concept of "strategic triangle" though applied to the relationship between the U.S., China and the Soviet Union during the later phase of the Cold War, is not a concept from area studies based on the geo-cultural peculiarities of particular time and place, but a Social Science term based upon the logical, quasis-geometrical relationship among political actors in the international arena.¹⁴ The logic of triangularity should hence apply to any international situation meeting certain defining criteria: vis., (a) it circumscribes the possible relationship among three rational autonomous actors; (b) the bilateral relationship among any two of these actors is contingent on their relationship with the third; and (c) each actor actively seeks to engage one or the other or both to prevent its defection or hostile collusion and advance its own interests.¹⁵ In other words, it means that in a strategic triangle all the three participants are sovereign (i-e. free to decide their foreign policies based on perceived national interests); each actor in its bilateral moves must take into account the interests and possible reactions of a third actor; and each must be deemed necessary to the game at least in so its "defection" from one side to the other would critically shift the strategic balance.¹⁶

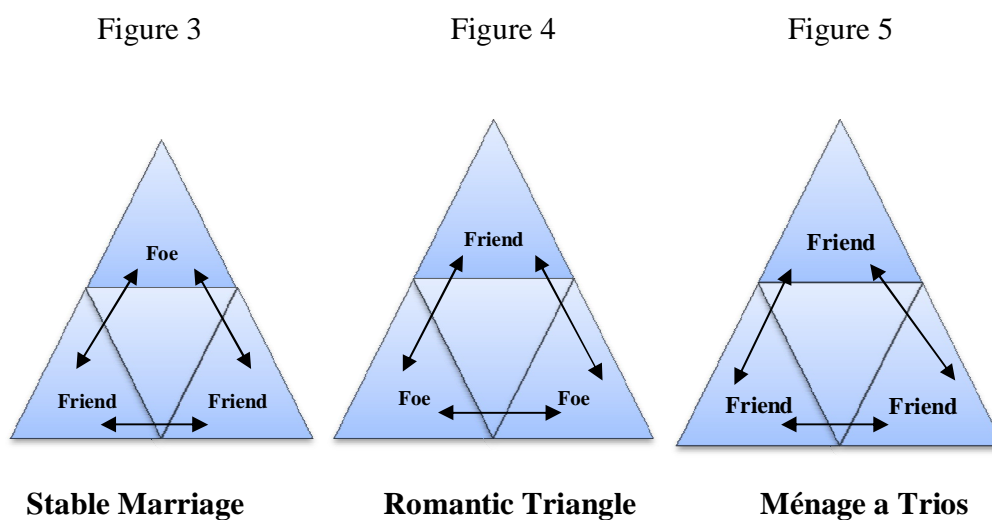
The relationship between the United States, China and India appears to meet all these criteria. All the three states are sovereign, independent and rational actors. The U.S. is the only Super Power today with global reach. Though it is an external power, the United States plays an important role in Asian security. At the same time, China and India are emerging Asian powers. Both are among what Brezinski described as "five geostrategic players", what Henry Kissinger listed as the "six big powers" and what Samuel Huntington pointed out are the "core states of seven civilizations".¹⁷ China is an important power in East Asia while India is a major power in South Asia. Furthermore, in the U.S.-China-India strategic triangle each actor fears alignment of the other two against itself. This fear exists for all three actors but is more strong for the two relatively weaker states, China and India. China and India have each taken action to counter a perceived

closeness of the other with the U.S. In spite of this fact, there is also some sort of apprehension within the United States regarding a possible China-India bloc.¹⁸

However, in spite of these facts, according to Liu Zongyi the U.S.-China-India triangle cannot be termed as another copy of the China-U.S.-Soviet strategic triangle. The reason is that each of the bilateral relationships has only weak implications for the third party.¹⁹ For example, the contentious issue between China and the United States is Taiwan but India has no interest in this issue. So far as Sino-Indian relations are concerned, it is characterized by the issues relating to border discord, Sino-Pak nexus and the Tibet issue, but these issues only have indirect connection with the U.S. In the Indo-U.S. relations there are no such fundamental contradictions as are found in U.S.-China or Sino-Indian dyads. Nevertheless, India and the U.S. held divergent views on some issues such as on terrorism and Pakistan. Thus according to Liu Zongyi, the relationship between China, India and the U.S. had characteristics of a strategic triangle but is, in essence, more a trilateral relationship. Likewise, John Garver argues that the post-Cold War Chinese-Indian-U.S. triangular relationship differs in several ways from the Sino-Soviet-U.S. triangle of the Cold War era. First of all, the new triangle is weak in the sense that the dominant issues in each dyad of the relationship do not relate to the third power. In the Sino-Indian relations, the main issues are the unresolved border and China's military links with Pakistan - issues that touch only indirectly on the U.S. Similarly, the dominant issues in Sino-U.S. relations - trade, human rights, missile defense and Taiwan have little to do with India. Indo-U.S. relations are likewise dominated by issues not closely related to China - economic cooperation and countering-terrorism.²⁰ Thus it can be asserted that the U.S.-China-India triangular relationship is very different from the Cold War era U.S.-China-Soviet triangular dynamics because in the case of former, the bilateral issues in one dyad hardly impacts the third actor and is dominated by strategic interests rather than ideological faith which was the main driver in the case of latter. If there is any significant connection among the three countries, it is that both China and India take their relationship with the U.S. as the most important factor in their external affairs.

Strategic Triangle between the U.S., China and India

Lowell Dittmer has attempted to explain the strategic triangle from a rational choice perspective. He has viewed the triangle as some sort of transnational game among three players. According to Dittmer, three ideal-type patterns of exchange exists in a triangle; the *stable marriage*, consists of amity (positive) between two of the players and enmity (negative) between each of the third (Figure 3); the *romantic triangle*, consisting of amity between one pivot player and the two wing players, but enmity between each of the latter (Figure 4); and the *ménage a trios*, consisting of symmetrical amities among all the three players (Figure 5).²¹



Characterizing the relationship between India, China and the United States in the above perspective the questions arises, "is there any possibility of an alliance of the two against the third"? Or "is there any pivotal state which can play-off the two suitors"? Or "will the common endeavors and interests bind all the three states together and mitigate their hostility in strategic areas"? To answer these questions it is important to analyze and examine the triangular relationship between these three actors from rational choice or transnational game perspective.

Stable Marriage

The first kind of strategic triangle is the *Stable Marriage*, which is basically an alliance of two against the third. When this strategic triangle is applied to the U.S.-China-India triangular dynamics, it appears that there is possibility of an alliance between the United States and India against China. It is due to the fact that China remains the weakest link in this triangular relationship as there are no fundamental/major issues of discord in the Indo-U.S. relationship unlike the U.S-China and Sino-Indian relationship which is fraught with various fundamental issues. There are some grave issues over which the United States and China hold divergent or conflicting views such as China's military modernization, maritime issues particularly in the South and the East China Seas, issues related to cyber security, Taiwan issue, human rights issues, economic issues (trade imbalance and currency manipulation), etc.²² Similarly, there are fundamental sources of disagreements in Sino-Indian relationship of which the most important are the Sino-Indian border dispute, Sino-Pakistan strategic and military cooperation, Tibet (Dalai Lama and Tibetan refugees in India), issues relating to water sharing and China's increasing presence along India's periphery especially in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).²³ On the contrary, in Indo-U.S. relations unlike the U.S.-China or Sino-Indian relations, there are no fundamental issues of contention. In fact, American and Indian interests are often congruent on major issues such as managing the rise of China, tackling terrorism and religious fundamentalism, security of sea lanes of communication (especially in the IOR) and sharing of democratic values. More pertinently, managing the rise of China is becoming more and more strategic necessity between India and the United States. It is because of the fact that neither likes to see what some have outlined as President Xi Jinping's vision of Asia where China remains the dominant player and the U.S. is playing a minimal role. India and the U.S. are aware of the fact that due to the phenomenal rise of China, the latter will play a crucial role at the regional and the global level. However, then what concerns New Delhi and Washington, is the nature of that role. These concerns have become more evident in the second decade of the 21st century leading the two sides to discuss China and Asia-Pacific more assertively. Washington has from time to time emphasized that it views New Delhi as an important part of its "Rebalancing" strategy. It is evident from the fact that while speaking in Australia on

November 2014, President Obama stressed that "the U.S. supported greater role in the Asia-Pacific for India".²⁴ New Delhi on its part has made the Asia-Pacific region as an important part of its foreign policy priority. In this regard, Prime Minister Modi also stated that the Indo-U.S. partnership "will be of great value in advancing peace, security and stability in the Asia and Pacific regions..." and again on another occasion President Obama and Prime Minister Modi "reaffirmed their shared interest in preserving regional peace and stability, which are critical to the Asia-Pacific region's continued prosperity".²⁵ Thus it is observed that there is a lot of convergence between New Delhi and Washington vis-a-vis Beijing. Both are wary at the assertive behavior of China and are apprehensive about its unpredictable behavior. In addition to these common apprehensions, both have bilateral issues with China which are yet to be resolved. In the backdrop of these facts, it is often argued that the U.S. and India may join hands to contain China or form an active/formal alliance against China.

However, despite the convergence of interests between India and the United States vis-a-vis China, the forging of formal alliance between New Delhi and Washington is unlikely and does not serve the interests of either at this moment. That is why the U.S. Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes dismissed the concern that the U.S. and India are joining hands against China. In this regard, he remarked, "I think the way in which the United States and India approach the issue in the Asia-Pacific is very similar in the sense that nobody is aiming for confrontation with China or even to contain China. Both the United States and India have very close relations with China in many different fields".²⁶ In addition to the above statement, New Delhi and Washington face many complexities/constraints which hold them back to forge a formal alliance against China. These constraints of India and the United States are outlined briefly in the following sub-sections.

India's Constraints

From India's point of view, although China is its strategic rival but it (New Delhi) is not going to form an active alliance with the United States against the former because doing so will reduce India's strategic autonomy. India has always attached the highest value to maintaining the independence of her foreign policy decision-making. It is unlikely that

India will sacrifice that independence now when it is much stronger economically, militarily and politically.²⁷ New Delhi has always maintained that the country's size, location, complexity, resources, history, and development imperatives demand that its foreign policy retain strategic autonomy and the United States should expect neither reciprocity nor alignment from India. Thus unless and until India's vital national interests are not threatened, it is not going to form any kind of alliance directed against any third country. Moreover, as a developing country, India needs to conserve and channelize its scarce resources for the social and economic development within the country. Attaining higher economic growth and sustaining them for a decade or more on the Chinese model will bring better dividends for India than an alliance with the United States. As Prof. B.R. Deepak stated that, "various strategic circles have been advocating an 'arc of containment' as regards our strategic rivals; I believe it would be too immature to act upon such ideas, for India neither has that raw power nor the economy to support and character such a course".²⁸ He further said, "neither the U.S. nor China considers India a serious geopolitical player at present, in order to have that status it is time for India to implement Deng's 'hide your capabilities and bide your time' dictum, and uplift over 300 million of its people from poverty by becoming the largest beneficiary of the present re-globalization process".²⁹ Likewise, Bharat Karnad also remarks, "India arm itself with a sense of its own worth and a grand strategic vision, pursue agile Asia-girdling geopolitics and an elastic and calculative strategy and game-plan, acquire meaningful conventional and thermonuclear military capabilities able to blunt the major China threat and, hence, neutralize minor regional adversaries (such as Pakistan), and become genuinely self-sufficient in arms". He further maintains, "in the event, for India to side wholly with the U.S. could lose the country its 'strategic autonomy' and curtail its strategic policy options. Whatever else it might do, it will not help India become a great power".³⁰ Thus there is wide consensus in India that instead of forming alliances to meet the external threats, it is more advantageous to channelize and strengthen its capabilities and act independently.

The Indian policy-makers are also concerned about the reliability of the U.S. as true strategic partner which can underwrite the costs of guaranteeing Indian security. It would not be in the interests of New Delhi to entrust her security to a super power with global interests. For the United States, India and her concerns will always remain only

one among many factors that go into the policy-making towards China and other issues. Additionally, New Delhi is concerned about a China-U.S. condominium (or G-2) and a China-U.S. crisis or confrontation. For example, during the 2008/2009 financial crises, the U.S. analysts began to float the 'G-2' theory of a condominium between China and the United States aimed at 'managing' the global economy. So dominant was this view that the former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Jim Steinberg stated in September 2009 that, "India should just stop whining about U.S.-China relations, grow-up and come to terms with it".³¹ Moreover, for New Delhi, geography itself mandates friendly relations with China. As a close and relatively powerful neighbor (China), India cannot afford to have an another hostile neighbor on its borders (Pakistan being already hostile neighbor). This fact is best illustrated by Bharat Karnad when he observes, "China along with Russia are too big, too powerful, and too proximal to India for New Delhi to alienate both by joining the American-led Western "club" even if this fetches it many 'benefits' of a 'real strategic relationship' with the U.S."³² Given these facts it can be asserted that India will have no interest in allying with the United States in any active strategy to contain or oppose China. As a legacy of its "non-aligned" foreign policy, Indian policy-makers maintain an aversion to alliances especially those that are perceived as counter-balancing other countries. This has prompted New Delhi to keep its distance from various U.S. centered organizations such as Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and the U.S.-Japan-Australia dialogue. Alternatively, India will maintain its strategic independence to pursue a multilayered approach combining both cooperation and competition with China in a way that serves its own unique political, economic, and security interests.

The U.S.' Constraints

Like India, the U.S. too has its own complexities and constraints in initiating any containment policy towards China. While it was easy for the U.S. policy-makers to create anti-Soviet blocs in order to check the Communist expansion during the Cold War period, the current interdependent global political structure does not favor such containment blocs. It is in this backdrop that though the geostrategic direction of the Indo-U.S. relationship is set toward closer cooperation, such cooperation is unlikely to be at the expense of Washington's fast growing ties with Beijing. Given the role that China would

play in the 21st century, a number of U.S. experts/officials are not in favor of containing China, instead they are endorsing for diversifying relationship with China. For instance, as former U.S. Secretary of Defense, Mr. William Perry had concisely summed-up China's growing presence as one where, "China is fast becoming the world's largest economic power and that combined with its UN permanent five states, its political clout, its nuclear weapons and modernizing military, make China player with which the U.S. must work".³³ It is therefore, unlikely that the U.S. will seek to alienate China, which is a major power in the world. The U.S. is aware of the fact that a hostile China could determinately affect the U.S. interests in many ways. It would also not like to jeopardize its substantive economic interests in China for the sake of India. For instance, the U.S.' and China's trade volume is over US\$ 555 billion, whereas India's combined trade volume with the U.S. and China is not more than US\$ 170 billion. The kind of deep engagement the U.S. and China is having is clear from the hundreds of dialogue mechanisms that exist between the two states at various levels cutting across economic and security fields such as diplomatic exchanges, the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade, and Multilateral settings including Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the East Asia Summit (EAS), IMF, World bank, and the WTO.³⁴ Even politically, China with its veto power in the UN Security Council counts more for the U.S. policy-makers than does India.

Moreover, just like New Delhi has reliability concerns about Washington, the latter has also reliability concerns about the former. Some Americans even question whether the quest for "strategic autonomy" will allow India to develop a truly strategic partnership with the U.S. In addition to it, Washington also worries about the gap between Indian potential and performance. Part of the rationale for supporting India's rise is to help demonstrate that democracy and development are not mutually exclusive. Without delivering, however, this rationale and India's importance fades away.³⁵ In this regard, Brahma Chellaney writes, "it is no surprise that Washington intends to abjure elements in its tie with New Delhi that could rile China, including for example, holding any joint military drill in Arunachal Pradesh. In fact, Washington has quietly charted a course of tacit neutrality on Arunachal Pradesh. Moreover, the U.S. is showing through its growing strategic cooperation with India's regional adversaries, China and Pakistan,

that it does not believe in the exclusive partnership in any region".³⁶ Given these facts, it becomes clear that containment of China cannot be in the immediate interests of the United States owing to the need of China in meeting serious challenges in the 21st century and the interdependent nature of U.S.-China economic relations.

Thus from the above discussion it can be concluded that despite the growing convergence of interests between New Delhi and the Washington on a range of issues particularly regarding the unpredictable behavior of China, neither side wants to antagonize Beijing for their respective compulsions and constraints. Moreover, neither India nor the United States is interested in the others relationship with China being too friendly or conflictual. As Harry Harding notes:

The history of the triangle implies, in fact, that it is highly unlikely that either the Indian or the American governments will seek an anti-China alignment, unless Beijing's policy toward both of them becomes far more hostile and uncompromising than it is at present. In the absence of such an uncompromising Chinese posture, a U.S.-India alignment would unwisely lock both countries into antagonistic relationships with China that would not be in either nations interests. It might imply an American commitment to Indian security that it would be expensive for the United States to meet. Conversely, it might imply an Indian reliance on American backing that India would not want.³⁷

The above statement reflects that in the long term this equation may change and there is possibility that India and the United States may come closer to form an alliance against China if their relationships with Beijing assumes a conflictual form. From India's perspective, the likely trigger issues which can create Sino-Indian conflict includes border issue, China's continued nexus with Pakistan, China's increasing presence in South Asia particularly in the Indian Ocean region, etc. It is in this context that a renowned Indian Professor Mr. Swaran Singh while writing in *China Daily* stated, "Although India's DNA will never allow it to become a close ally of the U.S. and its leadership can never be imprudent enough to adopt a policy of containing China, there is no doubt that China's continuous rise has become a matter of concern for New Delhi".³⁸ It means that India's policy towards China is not fixed and may change in future if the rise of China threatens India's vital interests. In such a situation, New Delhi has no other option but to

align with the United States and other likeminded countries vis-a-vis China. Similarly, there are also some trigger issues between China and the United States such as Taiwan issue, China's assertive behavior in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, threatening the security of its allies in East Asia, etc. Moreover, the U.S. policy-makers are uneasy about China's not-too-hidden aim to dominate Asia - an objective that runs counter to U.S. security and commercial interests as well as to the larger goal for a balance of power in Asia.³⁹ To help avert such a dominance, Washington has already started building countervailing partnerships in the region, without any attempt to contain China. However, this situation may change if any of the above mentioned issues threaten the security of either side. In such a situation, India will be the ideal country for the United States to ward-off any threat emanating from the Communist China. For the time being, Washington and New Delhi have relationships with Beijing that have elements of cooperation, competition and particularly conflict - though in different degrees. Each country has a blended approach of engaging China, while preparing for the worse in Chinese behavior. Each thinks a good relationship with the other sends a signal to China, but neither wants to provoke Beijing or force to choose between the other and China. Each also recognize that China's unpredictable behavior is partly driving the Indo-U.S. partnership. But that partnership has not assumed the shape of a *stable marriage* or a formal alliance between New Delhi and Washington so far though in the future there is possibility if both these states perceive that their interests are in danger due to Chinese behavior/policies.

Romantic Triangle

The second kind of triangle is *Romantic Triangle*, wherein in one pivot player plays-off two suitors. According to S. Woo the most desirable position in a strategic triangle is the "pivotal position" in relation to two wings.⁴⁰ The pivot enjoys the friendly relations to the other two states where the latter two are hostile to each other. In order to get maximum concessions from one wing, it is necessary for the pivot to arouse a certain degree of jealousy or pain in it by "tilting" towards the other wing.⁴¹ For the United States which currently enjoys a dominant position in this kind of triangle, China and India are two major powers that can influence security affairs in the Asia-Pacific especially in East

Asia and South Asia. China and India are also transitional and emerging countries with billion plus population and both perceive their relations with the United States as their most important external relationship. It is due to the fact that the economic development and ascent to great power status of China and India needs America's cooperation and support. At the same time, given their conflictual relationship with each other, China and India seek to outwit each other in developing its relationship with the United States. The U.S. on the other side, needs the huge markets of these two big Asian countries. In addition to it, Washington needs the support of China and India on various issues on which India and China may diverge (e.g., Sino-U.S. G-2 or Indo-U.S. cooperation in Asia-Pacific). Given these facts, some experts have predicted that India will emerge as a pivotal state in the U.S.-China relations. For example, Robert D. Kaplan asserts that India will emerge as the key Eurasian pivot state because of its effects on relations between the U.S. and China. As the U.S. and China became great power rivals, the direction in which India tilts could determine the course of geopolitics in Eurasia in the 21st century.⁴² However, given the current dynamics between these three states, it appears that instead of pivotal state, India will emerge or act as a swing state between China and the United States. As Bharat Karnad while responding to James Carafano's review of his book, writes that:

Indeed, it is India's bigness and potential heft and its capacity to tilt the "correlation" this way or that as between the U.S. and China, the U.S. and China + Russia, and at the regional level between Iran and Israel, etc., that makes India 'indispensable' to the global and regional balance of power systems as well as the international economy, and an entity none of the big powers or regional powers can ignore. It is this situation that provides India with opportunities.⁴³

New Delhi itself knows well that instead of taking sides, it is better to be a swing state in the global balance of power particularly in the China-U.S. equation. Some others have propounded that China can be a pivotal state in Indo-U.S. relations and still others held that the U.S. is already a pivotal state in Sino-Indian relations. According to Sun Xun, as the only super power, the U.S. enjoys some advantages in China-India relations. Both China and India want to maintain a good relationship with the U.S. as Sino-Indian relations are strongly affected by the U.S. foreign policy. But Sino-U.S. and Indo-U.S.

relations are relatively unaffected by the actions of the third party.⁴⁴ Thus, among the three sides of the triangle, only the Sino-Indian dyad is sensitive to triangular impacts. Likewise, Siddharth Varadarajan (editor of *The Hindu*, leading English daily from India) while delivering a lecture at I-House on 28 March, 2013 said:

When we speak of troika - India, the United States and China - who will be the centre of this troika is really important. Today, it is the United States that is doing the balancing because, notwithstanding any long term rivalries, U.S.-China communication, trade, and interaction is at a much greater level than the India-U.S. communication and trade or India-China interaction - even though at the cultural or political level, there is greater comfort between India and the United States.⁴⁵

Thus, currently it is the United States which enjoys a pivotal position in the triangle. China's unwillingness to adopt its policies to accommodate India's rise and the fact that both China and India value their ties with the United States more than with each other, provides Washington enormous leverage vis-a-vis the two Asian giants. Given this fact, the U.S. could be a positive factor in Sino-Indian relations if it tries to promote regional stability in South Asia and to help China's and India's economic modernization. But it could also play a negative role, should it play the India 'card' in dealing with China or play the China 'card' in developing its relations with India.⁴⁶ When Washington's role in the Sino-Indian relations is analyzed and examined in the post-Cold War era, it is observed that on several occasions the U.S. sometimes inclined more towards China and at the other towards India. This oscillating nature of the U.S.' policy towards these two Asian giants have created strategic dilemma between China and India. Such an example was first witnessed in the aftermath of India's nuclear tests in May 1998 when the United States and China issued a Joint Statement on South Asia urging India and Pakistan to halt their nuclear program and resolve all their issues by peaceful means. This development of bonhomie between the U.S. and China was viewed negatively by New Delhi. However, this bonhomie between Washington and Beijing did not last long and once again changed when George W. Bush became the U.S. President. At the very beginning of his administration, he began to term China as a "strategic competitor" and began to incline towards India. The Bush administration wanted to use India to balance the growing rise of China. It is evident from the statement of the then U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza

Rice when she announced Washington's decision to "make India a global power".⁴⁷ In the following years, the Bush administration turned the Indo-U.S. relationship into a strategic partnership by various agreements like Civil Nuclear deal, defense cooperation, Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP), etc. All these developments in Indo-U.S. relations were perceived by China as containment moves by New Delhi and Washington against Beijing.

This equation between the three countries changed once again when President Barack Obama entered the Oval office in 2009. At first, Obama did not rate India as highly as President Bush did, which caused dissatisfaction and concern in India. Moreover, when Obama paid his first state visit to China, the two countries issued a Joint Statement which declared that the U.S. and China "welcomed all efforts conducive to peace, stability and development in South Asia.... and to support the improvement and growth of relations between India and Pakistan".⁴⁸ The U.S. then held the first Strategic Dialogue with India in Washington in 2010 to demonstrate its respect which was followed immediately with the China-U.S. Strategic and Economic Dialogue (SED) in Beijing. Moreover, while on the one hand, Washington floated the idea of G-2 concept to share the global responsibilities and tackling various international issues ("Af-Pak" Terrorism, North Korean and Iranian nuclear proliferation) between Washington and Beijing, at the same time declared India as "linchpin" in its rebalancing strategy, which was widely considered as a response to China's rise. In this constant dynamic interactions between these three states, while India seeks to prevent a U.S.-China alignment or U.S. acknowledgement of South Asia as China's sphere of influence, Beijing opposes India's participation in the U.S. containment of China. Given these ambiguities in Washington, Beijing and New Delhi, there is much uncertainty surrounding the direction of the triangular dynamics between them. More pertinently, the U.S.' ambiguity towards China and India and playing-off one state against the other has led Beijing and New Delhi to expand their bilateral relations in spite of the fact that several issues between these two Asian giants still remain unresolved. For instance, India and China seem to have reached the conclusion that they need peaceful borders with each other in order to expand themselves internally, pursue their regional interests, and fulfill their own global aspirations. The two countries also realize that their global images are boosted by

adopting cooperative approach toward one another, thereby furthering the phenomenon referred to as "Chindia" the idea that the combined rapid economic growth of the two most populous countries in the world will make Asia the new centre of global economic and political activity.⁴⁹

In the above context, characterizing the relationship between India, China and the United States as a romantic triangle, however, could be too simple because their relationship are much more complicated than that. No doubt, the United States enjoys some advantageous position in the Sino-Indian relations but has not been able to placate the two states against each other. There are two reasons for this: First, the United States itself does not want that Sino-Indian relations should deteriorate into open conflict because it will be against the interests of Washington. For instance, in case of open conflict between the two Asian giants, the U.S. has to take sides. For the time being, Washington is not interested to entangle in other countries wars. Moreover, the U.S.' interests in China and India would also suffer a considerable loss. Secondly, India and China, are aware of the fact that too much reliance and too high expectations from the U.S. is not going to serve their interests as both are suspicious about its (the U.S.) reliability in case of crisis. Therefore, both these Asian powers have come to the conclusion that it is in their best interests to reduce the competitive and conflictual elements in their bilateral relations and enhance the cooperative and friendly relations. Lastly, New Delhi sees some degree of U.S.-China competition as in its interests because it makes India the object of courtship by both Washington and Beijing. However, the overt conflict between China and the United States could result in the loss of leverage for the swing state (India). Currently, all the three states in the triangle benefit from a degree of competition but lose if competition turns into overt rivalry and confrontation. All these developments reflect that the interests of these three powers towards each other are in a state of constant flux and particularly the depth and complexity of Sino-Indian relations limits the possibility of U.S. playing-off two suitors (China and India).

Ménage a Trios

The third kind of a strategic triangle is the *Ménage a Trios* wherein all the three countries have mutually positive relationship and all of them are linked together by

common endeavors. Here this kind of strategic triangle is applied to the trilateral relationships between China, India and the United States because in the post-Cold War world of globalization, the levels of interdependence between these three states are so high and important that a trilateral relationship can yield win-win- outcomes.⁵⁰ Within this context, there are two frameworks in which the three states seek to forge cooperative relations among themselves. First, each of the three bilateral relationships (Indo-U.S., Sino-India and U.S.-China) are mutually reinforcing that an expansion or improvement in one relationship will likely lead the third country to pursue better relations with the other two.⁵¹ Thus, as far as the trios are concerned, all have reached some sort of consensus as to how to handle and take their relationship forward. For instance, the consensus between the U.S. and China avoids war, conflict, and confrontation; it is the consensus for peace, growth, prosperity, and win-win cooperation. Likewise, India and China have reached a consensus for economic cooperation and not let the border or any other issue become a hindrance in developing a comprehensive strategic partnership. In the same vein, if the U.S.-China relationship is a hard reality, India's developing an increasingly strategic and economic relationship with the U.S. is an aspiration, and there is consensus for such an aspiration on both sides.

Second, there are three important areas where the interests of the trios converge to some extent such as to maintain economic interdependence among themselves and to maintain global financial stability, in addressing the environmental issues, and fighting the menace of global terrorism. The cooperation in all these areas between the U.S., China and India provides stability to the triangle to some extent. For instance, the economic interdependence between the three countries has increased since the last two decades to such an extent that none want to disturb such a relationship. All the three country's economies are intertwined and interconnected with each other and all the three states benefit from such a relationship. While China and India need the technology transfer, FDI, access to U.S. markets and other economic incentives from the United States; the latter needs the huge markets of these two Asian giants and cooperation on addressing various problems relating to global economic issues such as protection of IPR (Intellectual Property Rights), addressing global financial issues, etc. It is due to this common understanding that the bilateral trade between the three dyads has witnessed a

significant upward trend since the past few decades. For example, China is now the largest U.S. trading partner (after Canada), third largest U.S. export market (after Canada and Mexico), and the largest source of U.S. imports.⁵² In 2014, the bilateral merchandise trade between the U.S. and China was US\$ 590 billion. Furthermore, bilateral investment has also played an important role in the U.S.-China economic relations. A major portion of China's investment in the U.S. is comprised of the U.S. securities, while FDI constitutes the bulk of U.S. investment in China. China's holding of U.S. treasury security raised from US\$ 118 billion in 2002 to US\$ 1.27 trillion in January 2014, making China largest holder of U.S. treasury securities.⁵³ Likewise, Indo-U.S. economic relations are also growing though it is very low as compared to U.S.-China trade. Overall, bilateral trade between the U.S. and India rose five fold from US\$ 12 billion in 2001 to US\$ 62 billion in 2014 which is expected to touch US\$ 100 billion mark by 2018.⁵⁴ Total trade in services for 2011 was US\$ 54.42 billion. From April 2000 to September, 2014, total FDI inflows from U.S. to India stood at US\$ 13.12 billion, making U.S. the sixth largest contributor of FDI to India. On the other hand, the Sino-Indian dyad has also witnessed a significant rise in the bilateral trade since the end of the Cold War. For instance, from very modest beginning of US\$ 2 billion in 2000-01, the Sino-Indian bilateral trade rose to US\$ 70 billion in 2014.⁵⁵ Moreover, China has become India's largest trading partner and India is China's seventh largest export destination. Besides these bilateral economic ties, the three countries also share an interest in maintaining global financial stability, encourage rule based trade among nations, security of maritime routes of trade and energy supply, etc. None of the three states would like to jeopardize such a deep and interwoven economic interactions which is necessary for their sustained economic growth rates. Thus in the economic sphere, there is a consensus among the three countries to promote a 'prosperity triangle'⁵⁶ in spite rivalry and suspension in the security and the strategic arenas.

Likewise, global terrorism is another area where the three states share an identical view that this menace poses a serious threat not only to their respective states but to the global peace and stability at large. Therefore, the trios have reiterated from time to time their commitment to fight this menace with bilateral and multilateral efforts. For instance, the counter-terrorism cooperation between China and the U.S. has improved their

relationship to a great extent. In September, 2005, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick acknowledged that, "China and the United States can do more together in the global fight against terrorism" after "a good start", in his policy speech that called on China to be a "responsible stake holder" in the world.⁵⁷ Similarly on 24 March, 2014 at the sidelines of Nuclear Security Summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping said that he appreciated Obama's condemnation of terrorism in all forms and China is willing to work with all the countries, including the United States, to fight terrorism.⁵⁸ Indo-U.S. cooperation on counter-terrorism has also increased since the end of the Cold War. Both of them are concerned with the issues of global terrorism, religious extremism, drug trafficking and maritime security. In the post 9/11 period, there was a considerable counter-terrorism cooperation between the two countries in the areas of law enforcement, including programs developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Diplomatic Security Anti-Terrorism Assistance (DSATA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).⁵⁹ Besides, the Indo-U.S. Counter-Terrorism Joint Working Group's (CTJWG') agenda was considerably strengthened. CTJWG became one of the premier and useful means for exchanging of intelligence and sharing of information, devising anti-terrorism programs and other areas of mutual concern between the two countries.⁶⁰ China and India have also pledged to work together in the fight against terrorism. In a recent Joint Statement on 21 November, 2015 the two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in combating international terrorism through (a) exchanging information on terrorist activities, terrorist groups and their linkages; (b) exchanging experiences on anti-hijacking, hostage situations and other terrorism related crimes; (c) coordinating positions on anti-terrorism endeavors at regional and multilateral levels and supporting each other.⁶¹ In addition to the global imperatives, the need for counter-terrorism cooperation between China and India arises from the fact that Indian state of Kashmir and China's Xinjiang province are infested with separatist movements. In this regard, the *Global Times*, a Chinese daily quoted "...separatists in Xinjiang, bordering disputed Kashmir, are believed by the Indian government to have certain links with terrorists in Kashmir - a hotbed of terrorists that India has blamed for attacks".⁶² Due to this common threat posed by terrorism, China and India find it in their common

interests to tackle this problem both bilaterally as well as in collaboration with other states particularly the United States.

Thus all the three countries share the common interest in fighting terrorism. In addition to the bilateral cooperation between the three dyads, the trilateral cooperation on counter-terrorism between the U.S., India and China can be best illustrated in Afghanistan. The security situation in Afghanistan has not improved much in spite of the international efforts. Since 2006, Taliban has been regaining control over most of the areas in Afghanistan. The re-ascendance of Taliban poses a serious threat to the regional peace and stability. According to a 2014 UN Security Council report, "insurgent groups (and) international terrorists...took advantage of the protracted political and electoral crisis, to mount major assault around the country".⁶³ Although each external actor has its own interests and strategies when it comes to Afghanistan, the current turmoil in the country has already negatively affected the security in the neighboring countries. For instance, the instability in Afghanistan can intensify the activities of East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) which is a violent separatist group founded by Uighur militants in China's Xinjiang province. Similarly, the Afghan instability also threatens India's northern areas especially the state of Jammu and Kashmir which is geographically in proximity with Afghanistan. That is why both the Asian powers in collaboration with the United States are actively involved in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and to help the Afghan government to help in bringing peace and stability in the country. In this regard, since 2001, India has committed to provide Afghanistan with US\$ 2 billion in aid, training Afghan police and civil servants, offering scholarships to Afghan students, etc. Similarly, China has been actively involved in reconstruction of Afghanistan and has participated in various security related initiatives. Moreover, the trios are actively involved in Afghanistan's recovery and stability through multilateral venues such as the Istanbul Process (known as Heart of Asia) and India and China through Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).⁶⁴ The 'Istanbul Process' of which China and India are active members and the United States is supporting country outside the region has played an important role in a number of areas such as forging consensus among countries in the region, advancing cooperation among them on the challenges that Afghanistan faces and promoting peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan. China and India also play an

important role through SCO since India became full member of this important regional organization along with Pakistan in July 2015, during the SCO Summit in Russia. Security cooperation among SCO members is rooted in a shared strategic need to contain three forces - terrorism, national separatism, and religious extremism because these factors directly affect the member countries including China and India.

The United States, China and India also share the common concern in addressing climate change problem which threatens each and every state without any considerations for geographical limitations. The cooperation between these three countries also becomes significant in the context that they are the three largest emitters of Green House Gases (GHG) making up to 51 percent of global emissions. Moreover, as they are expected to be the three largest economies by 2030, they will remain top emitters.⁶⁵ Thus, it is argued that U.S.-China-India cooperation on climate change would have not only trilateral but global benefits.

From the above analysis, it is observed that there exists tremendous potential of cooperation between the United States, China and India in addressing the common and global issues such as international terrorism, climate change, and maintaining robust economic ties. On the basis of congruity of interests between these three states, it is sometimes asserted that it would reduce their political and security competition and ultimately lead to the emergence of *ménage a trios* wherein all the three countries have mutually positive and win-win relationship as all of them would be linked together by common endeavors. However, when the trilateral cooperation on these common issues are minutely examined and analyzed, it emerges that there are also conflicting and diverging interests even in these areas of cooperation. In other words, it can be asserted that there is deep complexity in the bilateral and trilateral interests which has so far blocked them to forge a full-fledged cooperative relationship (like those of *ménage a trios*). For instance, in spite of substantial rise in U.S.-China economic relations, the discord over various trade related issues have often strained the relationship between Washington and Beijing. The U.S. complains that China continues to maintain a number of state controlled policies that hinder trade and investment flows. In this context, the major U.S. complaints related to trade against China include China's efforts to maintain

undervalued currency, infringement on IPR, mixed record on implementation of the WTO obligations and the espionage of U.S. firms.⁶⁶ On the other side, China has been highly critical of the U.S. obstacles to Chinese investments in the United States, the U.S. restrictions on exports of high-tech products to China, countervailing duties against Chinese imports, the U.S. dominated international monetary order, etc.⁶⁷ Similarly, the Indo-U.S. trade relations have also been fraught with tensions. Each side contended that some aspects of the other's economic and trade policies hinder greater trade and investment growth. For Example, Washington considers New Delhi's IPR protection as inadequate, and its localization policies as non-tariff barriers.⁶⁸ Washington and New Delhi also differ on issues about the WTO and other proposed trade agreements. On 31 July, 2014, India withheld its support of a protocol that would ratify the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) agreed upon by all WTO members in December, 2013. Moreover, while India and the United States have expressed the support for Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), ongoing negotiations are stalled after each nation decided to revise its model BIT agreements.⁶⁹ The Sino-Indian trade relations have also been fraught with frictions particularly by New Delhi's complaint about the increasing trade deficit with Beijing which reached a record US\$ 37.85 billion in 2014 of the overall US\$ 70 billion bilateral trade.⁷⁰

Likewise, even when the three states face the threat of terrorism and have common interests to eliminate this menace, the trios have different perceptions, methods and attitudes with the resolution of this problem. For example, India have been wary since long on Washington's inability to bring pressure on Pakistan to stop pushing militants into the Indian side of Kashmir.⁷¹ For India, Pakistan represents the epicenter of the terror threat against it, and Indian officials are frustrated that Washington has not taken required measures to pressurize Islamabad to more aggressively dismantle *Lashkar-e-Toiba* (LeT) and other Indian-centric terrorist organization's infrastructure. While Washington realizes the danger that LeT poses to regional stability and has been vocal about bringing the Mumbai attackers to justice, it still does not meet Indian expectations of placing it on equal footing with other terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda.⁷² Likewise, though China and India have sufficient reason to cooperate on counter-terrorism issues, but the two also held divergent views when the issues of terrorism are related to Pakistan.

For instance, China has shielded Pakistan several times by putting a technical hold on India's demand for UN Security Council to take action against Mumbai attack mastermind Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, Hizbul Mujahedeen Chief Syed Salahuddin and Lashkar-e-Toyaba leader Hafeez Sayed who are living in Pakistan.⁷³ Similarly, the U.S. and China do have many reasons to cooperate on the issue on terrorism, but they also differ on various issues related to the problem. For the United States, Tibetan and Uighur movements in China are legitimate protests while China treats them as an acts of terrorism threatening its security.⁷⁴ In Afghanistan also, the three states are also at odds with each other. For instance, though the U.S. has welcomed India's participation in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, at the same time it does not want to antagonize Pakistan over the growing influence of New Delhi in Kabul. Similarly, though the presence of the U.S. led NATO forces stationed in Afghanistan has been advantageous to China by restricting the movements of ETIM Uighur militants along the Sino-Afghan border, but at the same time, China does not like the U.S. military presence close to its south western borders. In case of China's and India's role in Afghanistan, China is more comfortable in working with its all-weather friend Pakistan than with rival India. It can be reflected from recent peace talks between China-Pakistan-Afghanistan-U.S minus India.

Moreover, though all the three countries understand that environmental issues pose a common threat not only to these states but to the world at large, the trios differ in how to address this problem. Since 1992, the trios along with other states have been pledging to take measures that would avoid dangerous warming. However, the efforts were marked by discord and failure, ineffective agreements, and particularly the refusal of the biggest emitters (like the U.S. and China) to take more responsibility.⁷⁵ It is due to the fact that the three states bring very different perspectives to the climate issue, reflecting their different circumstances and development levels. For instance, in India, China and the United States, the three largest emitters of greenhouse gases (GHG) have 18, 113, and over 800 motor vehicles per capita. The per capita production of Co₂ in these three countries is 2.6, 8.13, and 19.86 tons respectively.⁷⁶ It is due to this asymmetry in development levels that India and China took to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and plead that the developed countries especially the United States should take more responsibilities and provide unhindered technology

transfer to developing countries and other financial resources to help them to meet this common challenge. They maintain that global warming is not caused by a couple of decade's development in India and China, but by the accumulated carbon emissions by industrialized countries such as the United States and other European countries for over two hundred years.⁷⁷ In contrast, the United States expects that India and China should share more responsibilities in accordance with their development status and in this way opposes using legacy divides that put China and India in the same category as truly poor country like Sudan.⁷⁸

Thus it is observed that the interests of these three countries are very complex even in those area where they share commonality of views to some extent. While the three states agree that the problem of climate change and the global terrorism are the serious problems which needs the concerted efforts by all the three states, but they differ on the issue of methods, responsibilities and interests to tackle these issues. It is due to this complex, divergent and at the same time the overlapping of interests which has so far blocked them to forge a full-fledged cooperative relationship (like those of *ménage a trois*). Nevertheless, economic cooperation/interaction is the only area, in spite of some frictions, wherein the interests of the three state's converge. But at the same time, it has not diminished their security and political competition which still remains a powerful ingredient of this triangular game between these three states.

Sino-Indian Cooperation and the U.S. Fears

In spite of the fact that the Sino-Indian relations are characterized by deep geopolitical rivalry and fraught with tensions on various issues, they are the two largest developing countries in the world having commonality of history, economy and social characteristics and profiles of development. Deng Xiaoping (Chinese Premier) once remarked that "if China and India are developed, we can say that we have made our contribution to mankind".⁷⁹ His observation about the importance of Sino-Indian cooperation has acquired more significance in the contemporary world as it is moving towards a multipolar system with a great impact on the economy, politics and foreign affairs of both China and India. That is why in January 2008, during Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan

Singh's China visit, the two countries issued a Joint Declaration "A Shared Vision for the 21st Century" which outlined cooperation between these two Asian powers on a broad spectrum of areas and joint endeavors to resolve the regional and global issues.⁸⁰ On the day of its signing, Hu Shishang (Chinese scholar) wrote, "The rise of the world's two most populous nations is of a revolutionary significance" hoping that Sino-India relations should "over step limits of geopolitics" and "should especially exceed the security predicaments and grudges against each other in the history."⁸¹

Thereafter, both the countries deepened their cooperative relationship in responding to international problems in the context of the G-20, climate change, WTO rules, the BRICS, etc. as the representatives for emerging and developing countries. This cooperation between China and India on a range of issues also becomes important in the context that both have more than 57 percent of the world's people living below less than US\$ 1.25 per day (UNDP 2010).⁸² Mandatory climate mitigation imperatives and world trade rules have significant implications for the future prospects of these marginal populations in a globalised world. In one of its joint statements, the two Asian powers reiterated that, "There is enough space in the world for the development of China and India, and the world needs the common development of both countries."⁸³ Moreover, as both aspire to play roles commensurate with their size in the global arena, reforming international institutions and economic systems in manner suiting their interests is high priority. As a result, they have consciously pursued issue-based collaboration on fundamental concerns such as international trade related rules, climate change, and transformation of financial architecture through coalitions involving other developing countries and emerging market economies. In the above backdrop, though China and India value their relationship with the United States with highest strategic importance, but at the same time both share some common concerns vis-a-vis Washington. For instance, both share the common platform against the U.S. hegemony and unilateralism which is the most prominent feature of the post-Cold War era. In fact, it is observed that China's multilateral diplomacy is closely associated to its opposition to U.S. hegemonism and is a step towards creating a multipolar world, with China playing a key role. This important foreign policy goal has been promoted and cherished by China since the end of the Cold War. For instance, Jiang Zemin officially incorporated and supported the concept of

multipolar world *duoji shijie* into foreign policy at the 14th Party Congress in 1992, to support China's stance that a peaceful, just and fair world is only possible through multipolarity.⁸⁴ Likewise, India too has set the emergence of multipolar world as one of its primary objectives, thereby sharing a common uneasiness with the U.S. This arises similar aspirations like that of China to be full participants in this multipolar world that was being contained by U.S. foreign policy. In the years following the end of the Cold War, Washington used human rights violations and other instruments as pretexts to convince the UN Security Council to back the U.S. wars to expand and thereby secure its dominance in different parts of the world including Haiti, Somalia, Iraq, etc. Furthermore, Washington used the international financial institutions such as IMF, WTO and World Bank to support its own free-market version of capitalism for promoting its economic interests at the expense of vast majority of poor countries.⁸⁵ The improvement in the Sino-Indian relations as well as the fact that India joined Brazil, Russia and other developing countries for negotiating world trade rules, issues related to environmental problem, etc. was an outcome of the Sino-Indian intentions to balance the U.S. dominance on various issues at regional and global level.⁸⁶ For this purpose, China and India have cooperated on various bilateral, trilateral and multilateral forums. For instance, in the post-Cold War era, China, India and Russia rapprochement has brought about a convergence of interests between these three states. They each are committed to promoting a multipolar world and preserving strict adherence to the principle of state sovereignty and non-interference in states internal affairs. India has resented and not supported the unilateral decision of the United States in the UN when it invaded Iraq in 2001. Similarly, China and Russia have opposed/vetoed several U.S. moves in the UN Security Council which were thought to be an interference in the internal affairs of other states (e.g., Syria, Libya, Iran, Iraq, etc.) The three states are also members of the BRICS along with Brazil and South Africa. As 40 percent of the world population and an important contribution to world economic output (25 percent), the aim of founding the grouping was to discuss economy and trade, primarily towards reforming of the IMF and the World Bank in order to enhance the representation of the emerging economies in these financial institutions.⁸⁷ India has also demonstrated its interest to join China and Russia led Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In 2015 during the SCO Summit

at Ufa (Russia), India was admitted as a full-flagged member along with Pakistan. The aim of this important group is to tackle the regional problems like terrorism, religious extremism and other forms of security related issues with local initiatives and endeavors without interference from outside powers like that of the United States. Moreover, China proposed Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) of which India is already a founding member is thought to emerge as rival to the U.S.-dominated international financial institutions such as World Bank and IMF.

Furthermore, as the leading developing countries, India and China have cooperated on many international issues vis-a-vis the developed North led by the United States. This cooperation has been mostly visible on climate change and international trade rules. For example, at Cancun 2003, China and India as part of the G-20⁸⁸ group of countries on agriculture, expressed disappointment over the lack of progress in dismantling the subsidies and market support on agricultural products from the developed countries. The G-20 resistance at the Cancun Ministerial was the first example of China and India collaborating at WTO by bringing together a formidable grouping of the emerging powers capable of productive diplomacy.⁸⁹ India and China have also cooperated in the creation of the G-33⁹⁰ (developing world) bloc at the WTO to promote a more "equitable" international trading system, including adopting convergent views on the elimination of trade distorting subsidies on agriculture.⁹¹ Similarly, the G-8 Summit at Heiligendamm in Germany in 2007 was the first occasion on which the Sino-Indian collaboration on climate change was witnessed by the world. They adopted the joint stand that given the historical responsibilities and current capabilities, developed countries and especially the United States had more responsibility in reducing emissions as compared to the developing countries. In collaboration with Brazil, Mexico, and South Africa, they formed the G-5 and pleaded for differentiated responsibilities in addressing climate change and allowing unhampered transfer of environment friendly technologies from North to South.⁹² More recently, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to China on May, 2015, the two sides issued a Joint Statement in which they urged developed countries to raise their pre-2020 emission reduction and honor their commitment to provide US\$ 100 billion per year to developing countries.⁹³

In the backdrop of these facts, it is observed that New Delhi and Beijing take similar approaches on many issues regarding the existing global politico-economic structure. They advocate for democratizing the existing international relations and replacing unilateral and hegemonic practices with a norm based, multipolar order in which they assert themselves as deserving actors. However, from the U.S perspective, too much Sino-Indian bonhomie would potentially create complications for the U.S. in the bilateral, regional and multilateral spheres. In this context, what Washington fears the most is the possibility of China and India along with Russia, forming an alliance based on common understanding and interests of a new international multipolar world order. However, it must be reiterated here that Sino-Indian cooperation is only issue based. They cooperate with each other vis-a-vis the U.S. where they perceive that their respective interests can be best secured. In other words, it can be asserted that their cooperation cannot be termed as an alliance against the United States. Each country, of course, would have to weigh the cost of any such efforts to its relations with the United States and the potential impact on their important goals that it might share in the region. For instance, despite India's desire to remain an independent power, which sometimes results in India's taking policy positions contrary to the United States, there is no enthusiasm for sharing a joint platform with the Chinese against the United States - India's largest source of much needed capital, investment, and advanced technology. That is why, during the trilateral foreign ministers meeting between China, India and Russia on 24 February, 2007 it was stated that their trilateral cooperation was not directed against any other country particularly the United States.⁹⁴ Similarly, regarding the BRICS grouping which is becoming a formidable grouping of the emerging economies, the members have reiterated time and again that it would not be an another exclusive "club". Article 6 of the Sanya Declaration highlights that cooperation among BRICS members "is inclusive and non-confrontational. We are open to increasing engagement and cooperation with non-BRICS countries".⁹⁵ Moreover, in spite of the overlapping of interests between China and India on various international issues like that of promoting multipolarity and common stand on various issues vis-a-vis the United States, they find themselves at odds even on those shared areas. For instance, in China, multipolarity is often expressed in terms of "saving others from U.S. hegemony" while in India,

multipolarity is expressed in terms of "saving itself and others" from the Chinese and the U.S.' hegemony. For India, China is the principal strategic adversary; for China it is the United States. Thus, it can be observed that the most likely scenario in the near future is that of weak triangle with ever-shifting, issue-based tilts by each of the three powers. Depending on the particular issue at hand, whether trade, climate change or terrorism, there will be shifting alignments in bilateral ties and multilateral cooperation.

Conclusion

After analyzing and examining various aspects of strategic triangle between the United States, China and India, certain observations can be made regarding the nature of triangular dynamics between these three states. It is observed that the strategic triangle between the trios is a complex and shifting one, which is highly fluid. Though it is a useful device to study the three countries relations in triangular framework, it is significantly affected by the other factors also which are related with these three countries. In other words, it can be said that the strategic triangle between these three countries does not exist in vacuum as there are other relationships especially with countries like Pakistan, Russia, Japan, etc. that influence the triangular dynamics. In addition to it, the three actors in the triangle have other interests in a number of areas and a host of imperatives at national and international level. The policy-makers in each actor of the triangle, therefore, has to take into account other considerations also which makes the situation fairly complex and fluid. In the context of these developments, the main feature of this emerging strategic triangle is that it is still in an embryonic/evolutionary stage and has not assumed the strong form like that of China-U.S.-Soviet strategic triangle of 1970s-80s. The budding strategic triangle is also weak in the sense that the dominant issues in bilateral relations between two states do not directly relate to the third state.

Moreover, currently the nature of interactions among the Sino-Indian, U.S.-China and Indo-U.S. dyad is far from hostile and full of uncertainties. It is due to the fact that though the drivers of bilateral relationship between the three dyads are strategic interests, growing economic integration and interdependence, has made the zero-sum game between the three countries inane. An aggressive bilateral relationship be it the U.S.-

China, Indo-U.S. or Sino-Indian against the third power would be damaging to all parties concerned. The three states are, therefore, showing a remarkably consistent and restrained reciprocity towards one another. In the context of this ambiguous and complex situation which is full of dilemmas, the general trend would be one where each of the three maneuvers for maximum diplomatic gain for itself vis-a-vis the other two powers. All the three countries would maintain good relations with the others and not enter into any alliance against each other. For example, India and the United States will collaborate on the issues where they share common interests vis-a-vis Beijing. Similarly, India and China, as the emerging and largest developing countries in the world may join hands vis-a-vis Washington on issues where their interests converge, e.g., promoting multipolarization of the international structure; reform of international financial system; and environment issues. On the other side, the U.S. and China have cooperated in the past on issues pertaining to Indo-Pakistan relations, issues relating to nuclear proliferation, Korean problem, etc. and can be expected to continue to do so which may not be welcomed by New Delhi. Thus the bilaterals between the three states are characterized by complex triangular relationship - the uneasy critical strategic triangle of the early 21st century, wherein cooperation and contrarian compulsions shape the policy responses. It is also observed that this triangular dynamic is asymmetrical in the sense that China and India are more worried about the possible alignment of the other with the United States than Washington's apprehensions about a potential Sino-Indian alignment. Though it remains to be seen how these three powers maneuver their positions in the triangular framework addressing their perceived security challenges in future, certain factors may cause a drastic realignment in the bilateral relations and may provide an entirely different look to this strategic triangle. The three likely trigger issues are Taiwan (U.S.-China), Pakistan (U.S.-India) and the boundary dispute and Pakistan (China-India). Any drastic development in any of these issues is likely to change the nature of the strategic triangle to a considerable degree.

Notes

¹ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Free Press, New York, 1992, p.xi.

² Ashley Smith, "Faultlines of Multipolar World", Review of Dilip Hiro, *After Empire: The Birth of Multipolar World Order*, Nations Books, 2010, Available at <http://isreview.org/issue/72/faultlines-multipolar-world> (Accessed on 8 March 2014).

³ According to Andrew Heywood, the declining influence of the U.S. can be seen in Latin America which was once considered as 'America's backyard'; it has to rely on Chinese diplomacy to exert influence over North Korea; EU diplomacy is needed to influence Iran; and even its capacity to exert pressure on Israel is limited. Moreover, China (for instance, over Tibet) and Russia (for instance, over Georgia) are largely immune from U.S. diplomatic pressure. The decline of the U.S.'s structural power is also evident in the rise of the G-20 as the key forum for global economic policy-making.

⁴ Vincent Wei-Cheng Wang, American Perspectives on the Rise of China and the Rise of India, Paper presented at the 2012 International Conference on Asia-Pacific Studies, Institute of China and Asia-Pacific Studies, National Sun Yat-Sen University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, 8-10, November, 2012. p.1, Available at <https://aacs.ccny.cuny.edu/2012conference/Papers/Wang,%20Vincent.pdf> (Accessed on 12 March 2014).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Michael Evens, "Power and Paradox: Asian Geopolitics and Sino-American Relations in the 21st Century", *Orbis*, Vol.55, No.1, 2011, pp. 84-85.

⁷ Ananya Chatterjee, "India-China-United States: The Post Cold War Evolution of Strategic Triangle", *Political Perspective*, 2011, Vol.5 No.3, pp. 74-95.

⁸ B.R. Deepak, The U.S.-China-India triangle: A New Tripolar World Order?, Paper No. 6013, South Asia Analysis Group, 30 September, 2015, Available at, <http://www.southasiainalysis.org/node/1869> (Accessed on 12 October 2015).

⁹ Chintamani Mahapatra, "India-China-Pakistan Triangle: The U.S. Factor", *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, Vol.6, No.4, October-December, 2011, p.414.

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- ¹¹ Ibid. p.321.
- ¹² Hans-Joachim K. Ruff-Stahl, "The China-Pakistan-U.S Strategic Triangle: From Cold War to War on Terrorism an Objection to Paul J. Smith's Article", *Journal of Defense Studies and Resource Management*, Vol.3, No.1, 2013, pp.1-2.
- ¹³ Robert S. Ross, *China, the United States and the Soviet Union: Tripolarity and Policy-Making in the Cold War*, Sharpe Publications, New York, 1993, p.4.
- ¹⁴ Lowell Dittmer, "Sino-Japanese-Russian Triangle", *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, Vol.10, No.1, 2005, p.1.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Lowell Dittmer, "On the "Triangulation" of Australian Foreign Policy", University of California, Berkeley, 2011, Available at www.deakin.edu.au/arts-ed/shss/events//dittmer (Accessed on 17 August, 2015).
- ¹⁷ Zhang Guihong, "U.S.-India Security Relations: Implications for China", South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), 2001, p.5, Available at <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume14/article2.htm> (Accessed on 13 June, 2015).
- ¹⁸ John W. Garver, "The China-India-U.S. Triangle: Strategic Relations in the Post-Cold War Era", *NBR Analysis*, Vol.13, No.5, 2002, pp.6-7.
- ¹⁹ Liu Zongyi, The China-India-U.S. Relationship: Where Will it Go?, Independent Strategic Analysis of Australia's Global Interests, Associate Paper, 17 April, 2012, pp.2-3, Available at http://futuredirections.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/FDI_Associate_Paper_-_17_April_2012.pdf (Accessed on 13 August, 2014).
- ²⁰ John W. Graver, op.cit., p.6.
- ²¹ Lowell Dittmer, "The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game - Theoretical Analysis", *World Politics*, Vol.33, No.4, 1981, p.489.
- ²² These issues have been discussed at length in the previous chapters of this thesis.
- ²³ Sumit Ganguly and Manjjeet S. Pardesi, "The Evolving U.S.-China-India Triangular Relationship", *Claws Journal*, Summer, 2010, p.67.

²⁴ Tanvi Madan, The U.S.-India Relationship and China, Brookings, 20 January, 2015, p.3, Available at <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2015/01/20-us-india-relationship-and-china-madan> (Accessed on 16 August, 2015).

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⁸⁹ Amitendu Palit, op.cit., p.245.

⁹⁰ The G-33 is a group of developing countries that coordinate on trade and economic issues. It has proposed special rules for developing countries at WTO negotiations, like allowing them to continue to restrict access to their agricultural markets. Despite the name, there are currently 48 member nations particularly from the developing countries.

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Chapter-VI

Summary, Observations and Conclusions

Sino-Indian relations as observed in the preceding chapters, although essentially bilateral in nature, have been influenced and even greatly shaped by the complex interplay of regional factors as well as by the dynamics of global politics. Since it is not an easy task to reach to a clear-cut conclusion on such a convoluted and vast foray of bilateral relations in the context of external factors, this concluding chapter has been restricted to enlist general findings of the study. But before doing that, a brief summary of the whole problem is provided here in order to present the contemporary dynamics of Sino-Indian relations and the impact of external factors particularly the role of the United States in such relationship.

Summary

From the earlier observations and analysis, it can be safely asserted that the Sino-Indian relations which are essentially of a bilateral nature are also shaped by multiple interplay of regional factors as well as dynamics of global politics. Even during the Cold War period, the Sino-Indian relations were not immune from the U.S.-Soviet rivalry and thereby the international political setting affected both China and India. In other words, Sino-Indian cooperation and later on rivalry were intertwined with the Soviet-American-Chinese triangular relations within the context of the global Cold War. In fact, in the early fifties, both China and India came closer to each other because of anti-imperialist and pan-Asiatic sentiment. This convergence between China and India was possible in spite of the fact that both the states adopted divergent paths in their foreign policy approaches as India followed the policy of non-alignment and China became the part of Communist camp led by the Soviet Union. Though it did not have an immediate effect on their relations but in the later years, Sino-Indian relations were determined by the dynamics of U.S.-Soviet interactions' in the Cold War framework. For instance, from late 1950s, in a parallel track to worsening of Sino-Indian relations occurred the incompatible split between China and the Soviet Union. A brief Sino-Indian Border War in 1962

occurred at a time when the United States and the Soviet Union, the two Cold War rivals were engaged in Cuban missile crisis. During the Sino-Indian border war, both the Super Powers came to aid India against Communist China. The U.S. and the Soviet Union in spite of their ideological rift, shared the common interest vis-a-vis China that is to contain its growing influence in the South Asian region.

In the post Sino-Indian border war, while the Indo-Soviet relations became quite intimate and cooperative, the Sino-Soviet relations further deteriorated because China could not reconcile to the fact that the Soviet Union supported a non-Communist country (India) against a fellow Communist country (China). China also started criticizing the erosion of India's non-alignment policy and its joining of the Soviet camp. These negative developments compelled China to seek rapprochement with the United States which was subsequently facilitated by Pakistan. By forging a strategic relationship with the U.S., China hoped to initiate a U.S.-Pakistan-China alliance to counter-balance the Soviet-Indian alliance. The new alliance between China, United States and Pakistan raised fresh apprehensions among the Indian and the Soviet policy-makers which resulted in further strengthening the Indo-Soviet relations by the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in August 1971. The combined effect of these varied linkages was the freezing of South Asian regional politics dominated by Sino-Indian interactions into the global pattern.

In the late 1970s, U.S.-China rapprochement was further consolidated by the establishment of normal diplomatic relationship between the two countries. By that time, the U.S. was also interested in Sino-Indian rapprochement as it perceived that India was too closer to Moscow. India's own policies toward China were affected by the changing global alignments and its own relations with the Soviet Union and the United States. From late 1980s, the global politics was characterized by the U.S.-Soviet rapprochement, and the resumption of dialogue between China and the Soviet Union. All these new developments indicated that in international politics, emphasis was laid on dialogue as means to resolve all outstanding issues between nations. These developments had also a positive impact on Sino-Indian relations. Moreover, as the pace of Sino-Soviet rapprochement accelerated in the late 1980s, the Soviet Union also encouraged improvement in Sino-Indian relations. Hence, it is observed that serious attempts were

made towards India-China rapprochement after Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in 1988. Thus, it becomes clear that during the Cold War period, the Sino-Indian relations were affected to a great extent by the external factors particularly by the dynamics and interactions of the United States and the Soviet Union and other regional and global factors.

In the post-Cold War period, both the Asian giants were compelled by the prevalent circumstances and contemporary historical forces to construct the edifice of rapprochement. Both being the developing countries, began to engage themselves in internal stability and economic development. Both aspired and supported the emergence of just and equitable international order devoid of any single global hegemon. Besides, both the states shared identical views on various international issues like GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), etc. Thus it was apparent that on various international and regional issues, India and China had commonality of interests which was bound to have a positive impact on the evolution of Sino-Indian relations. Bilaterally too, the continuation of high level political interactions contributed in a more tangible manner to the enhancement of understanding between the two Asian powers. Subsequently, with the Sino-Indian Summit level talks in 1993 and 1996, the overall bilateral relationship registered all round improvement.

However, it is also observed that in spite of such a considerable convergence of interests between China and India, they could not turn their relations into full-fledged cooperative relationship. It was due to the fact that the base of their rapprochement was raised on a weak platform in that there was distrust between both the sides on various issues. For instance, in spite of the changing global scenario in the post-Cold War era, the Sino-Indian border issue continued to remain intact due to slow pace of border negotiations and the slow progress in the implementation of confidence building measures (CBMs) reached in 1993 and 1996 between the two states. This issue related to border dispute still haunts the Sino-Indian relations even in the second decade of twenty first century. Moreover, China continued to augment Pakistan's defense capabilities even in the post-Cold War period which was perceived by New Delhi as Beijing's continued strategy to contain India in the South Asian. China continued to supply all kinds of modern weapons to Pakistan and the strategic depth between the two countries became

deeper by terming it as an 'all-weather friendship'. Furthermore, China continued to pursue balance of power in the South Asian region by enhancing its presence around India's periphery. China viewed military relations with other South Asian countries as legitimate relations but for India it constituted threat to its security. As such there were differences between India and China on the regional dimension.

Thus it is observed that in the post-Cold War era, though both the Asian giants took various steps in order to normalize their overall relationship in the context of changing global scenario, the security competition and strategic distrust remained intact and even become more intense in the subsequent years. In addition to it, though China and India began to cultivate close relations with the sole Super Power, the United States for their respective needs independent of each other but in the late 1990s a pattern of competitive bandwagoning between these two Asian powers for the U.S. support against each other became more intense and prominent. The first instance of such a bandwagoning was witnessed in 1998 in the wake of India's nuclear tests when China was successful in aligning with the United States against India. The U.S. policy toward these two giants in these years was determined/influenced by two factors - nuclear proliferation and economic interests. Thus the nuclear proliferation was itself an important ingredient of Clinton's South Asia policy which provided further impetus to the U.S.-China understanding against India's nuclear tests. Moreover, as compared to India, China was at a relatively more advanced stage of economic liberalization and development. China's huge markets, excellent infrastructure facilities and business friendly environment looked more suitable for the U.S. economic interests than India which was in the initial stage of liberalization and was behind China in creating suitable institutions and political consensus for the reforms.

However, in the initial years of the twenty-first century, India was successful to decouple the U.S.-China understanding vis-a-vis New Delhi. During the Bush administration and especially in its second term, the Indo-U.S. strategic partnership gathered the real momentum and at the same time China began to emerge as a powerful factor in the emerging strategic relationship between India and the United States. The Bush administration itself began to perceive China as a "strategic competitor" in contrast

to Clinton administration which had treated China as a "strategic partner". However, both the U.S. and Indian officials maintained the view that their growing relations were not aimed at or directed against any third country including China. But at the same time, the Bush administration's inclination toward India, enhancing defense and trade ties, and above all, his decision to facilitate civil nuclear energy trade with India were widely interpreted as driven by the desire to make India as a counter-weight to a rising China. While both India and the U.S. negated this assertion, Robert Blackwill (a key architect of Bush's India policy) later revealed the centrality of China factor in growing Indo-U.S. relations. In this regard, he noted that "President George W. Bush based his transformation of U.S.-India relations on the core strategic principle of democratic India as a key factor in balancing the rise of Chinese power". He also asserted that although this was not based on the concept of containment of China, without this China factor in the minds of American's, "Bush administration would not have negotiated the Civil Nuclear agreement and the Congress would not have approved it".¹ Thus during the first decade of 21st century and especially after 2005, India was successful in forging strategic ties with the United States. India and the U.S. shared the common concerns about the future role of China on the regional and global scene given its unprecedented rise since the end of the Cold War.

In the late 2000, and particularly with the advent of Obama administration, China was once again successful to wean away New Delhi from Washington. This can be reflected from the U.S.-China Joint Statement on South Asia (November 2009) which stated among other things, "that the two countries support the improvement and growth of relations between India and Pakistan".² Furthermore, the positive atmosphere prevailed in the meeting between President Obama and President Hu Jintao during G-20 meeting in 2009 and the summit meetings during Obama's visit to China in November 2009 and Hu's visit to United States in January, 2011. With these new and positive developments in the U.S.-China relations, India perceived that Obama administration's major aim in cultivating close relationship with Beijing was to get latter's support in tackling a range of global issues such as environmental problem, global financial crises, and security issues related to Af-Pak stability, North Korea and Iranian nuclear problem. These evolving trends exacerbated Indian fears that Washington could lower its strategic partnership with

New Delhi for the larger geostrategic interests with Beijing. In this context, the most negative development for India was the emergence of a U.S.-China G-2 framework in which China remains hostile to India and the U.S. is unviable as a balancing power. In order to pacify these Indian fears and balance its relationship with China, the U.S. President Obama visited India in November 2010. The visit helped in creating a long term framework to elevate the Indo-U.S. strategic partnership to a qualitatively higher level. During the visit the two countries agreed to engage and cooperate on developments in Afghanistan, East Asia, and Central Asia. The Indo-U.S. strategic cooperation was further boosted when the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited New Delhi on 19 July, 2011 to co-chair the second meeting of the Strategic Dialogue with the External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna. The qualitatively transformed relationship between India and the U.S. and especially the defense cooperation and convergence of interests on global and regional issues were perceived by China having long term repercussions for its interests. For instance, the United States' offer to give India a role in Afghanistan, East Asia, and Central Asia was not a welcome development for China. It was an apparent move adopted by the U.S. to send a message to China that Indo-U.S. cooperation would be extended to other regional areas also where China already has strong field.

The most important initiative which Washington adopted in the second decade of 21st century was the Rebalancing Strategy or Pivot towards Asia. India naturally appeared in the new U.S. rebalancing strategy due to its geopolitical location and commendable military capabilities. Defense cooperation with India has been made a key component of the pivot strategy as explicated by the President Obama and Secretary Hillary Clinton. During his visit to New Delhi in June 2012, the U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta described India as the 'lynchpin' of the U.S. military strategy in Asia.³ India on the other side, welcomed the U.S. rebalancing strategy and new focus on Asia. Motivated by the concerns about China's growing assertiveness, New Delhi perceived that the new U.S. strategy could compel Beijing to adopt a non-threatening approach toward India as China would be compelled to pay more attention toward East Asia where the new U.S.' military challenges could emerge. While India welcomed this new strategy, China was apprehensive and suspicious towards the new strategy and perceived it as a new measure adopted by Washington in collaboration with her allies and partners

particularly Vietnam, Philippines, Singapore and India to thwart its rise of great power status. Thus it can be observed that in the evolving dynamics of Sino-Indian relations, the U.S. factor is becoming more and more prominent.

With the change of government in China (March 2013) and in India (May 2014), the new leadership in both these Asian countries tried to forge close relationship with the United States. For instance, When Xi Jinping assumed the state Presidency at the opening session of the 12th National People's Congress in March 2013, he signaled a strong desire to strengthen the U.S.-China relations. During his visit to the U.S. on 7-8 June, 2013, Xi Jinping pressed Obama for a commitment to a "New Type of Great Power Relationship" *xinxing doguo guanxi* that explicitly sought to avoid strategic rivalry or conflict between the United States and China.⁴ From China's perspective, the new type of relationship enables the two powers to establish a new code of conduct in line with Chinese interests. In response, though the Obama administration assured China that it welcomes a strong and prosperous China that plays a greater role in the world affairs, but at the same time has viewed this Chinese new strategy with cynicism and suspicion. Moreover, the United States do not like the idea of another rival so quickly achieving strategic parity and influence. However, the most important hurdle for the U.S. which holds it back from forging such a type of relationship with China is the fear of upsetting the regional balance of power. The region's other middle powers would be unlikely to simply follow the joint dictates of China and the United States without being part of it. So far as India is concerned, Washington's forging such a type of relationship with Beijing raises questions about the reliability of the U.S. as a dependable partner against China. In this regard, India perceives that too much closeness between Beijing and Washington will freeze New Delhi out and will be fatal to her interests. It would also eliminate one of Washington's rationales for a stronger relationship with India. With such concerns, from the allies and partners in the region, the U.S. did not show much enthusiasm for China's proposal of "New Type of Great Power Relationship" as expounded by China's President Xi Jinping.

On the other side, the new government in India under the Prime Ministership of Narendra Modi began to incline more towards the United States as compared to previous

Congress led UPA (United Progressive Alliance) government. While the previous government has sometimes distanced itself from the U.S. citing "strategic autonomy" and "non-alignment", the new government has been more assertive in showing its resentment against various Chinese actions. The Modi government has crafted a strategy wherein it has sought to delink economic cooperation from political issues with China. Thus, while continuing to promote and maintain constructive economic and trade relations, it has not hesitated to show its resentment against China's expansionist postures. This development and strategy adopted by the new government in India has brought the United States strategically even more closer to India than in the past.

Main Findings of the Study

In the light of preceding discussion, the major findings of this study can be highlighted under the following points:

China's Interests

- China's main aim in the trilateral relations is to check Indo-U.S. strategic partnership becoming too "China-centric". China is concerned about the U.S. attempts to contain it and the profound effect on its security of an eventual integration of India into a U.S. alliance system.
- To deal with this eventuality, China has adopted two-pronged strategy, vis., (i) promoting good and cooperative relations with both India and the U.S. and at the same time, (b) taken some measures to deal with any potential threat emerging either from the United States or India or from the both.
- In the latter case, it has demonstrated to the Indian policy-makers that if New Delhi gets too intimate toward the United States, it can also intensify its measures contrary to Indian interests by enhancing and boasting Pakistan's nuclear and missile development programs, deployment of powerful military forces along the Sino-Indian border and enhance its strategic presence in India's backyard especially in Burma, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh.

Policy Options

- In the present circumstances, China's policy is to maintain cooperative relations with both India and the U.S. in spite of the fact that Beijing perceives Indo-U.S. growing strategic partnership as an evolving strategy for the containment of the rise of China. China has been maintaining this policy from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping. It can be reflected from the fact that China has sought to down-play the conflicting areas with both India and the U.S. and emphasized more on the cooperative areas. For instance, on the Sino-Indian border dispute which is one of the most intricate and historical issue between China and India, the two countries have been successful in maintaining an overall peace and tranquility along the Sino-Indian border. Border Defense Cooperation Agreement (BDCA) is the latest example in this direction which was signed in 2013 between Indian and China through which both Asian giants reached a comprehensive agreement "to avoid border tensions and army face-offs along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) by deciding that neither side will use military capability to attack other side".⁵ Similarly, cooperation with the U.S. is essential for the success of China's economic development drive which it has cultivated so cautiously since the economic reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. It would not like to destabilize its growth and economic development by antagonizing either India or the U.S.
- Although, China may at some time align with India vis-a-vis the United States, the main aim of forging such an alliance will be to keep New Delhi away from Washington as Sino-Indian cooperation against the United States naturally deviate the idea of Indo-U.S. "natural alliance" based on shared and common values like democracy, rule of law, etc.
- However, it is also observed that for China the cooperation with the United States is far more advantageous than an alignment with India against Washington. It is due to the fact that close relationship with Washington would naturally result in identical interests between China and the U.S. In such a situation, the U.S. in collaboration with China will turn blind eye towards India's aspiration of playing an enhanced role in the UN Security Council or other international decision-

making bodies. Moreover, cooperation with Washington in Asia would be a very big step toward the Chinese goal of being accepted as a peer of the United States in the global power structure. In this way, India's ability to emerge as a peer competitor to China in Asia would also be restricted to a great extent.

India's Interests

- From India's perspective, the main aim/interest within the trilateral framework is to avert U.S.-China cooperation that may be perceived as contrary to the Indian interests. There are several instances of such U.S.-China cooperation in the past against India and there is possibility that such happening may occur in the future also given the roller-coaster nature of U.S.-China relations. For instance, during India's nuclear tests in May 1998, the U.S. in collusion with China pressed India to accept non-nuclear status which was altogether resented by the Indian policy-makers. India does not want to see China as dominant power in South Asia with the U.S.' blessings.
- On the other side, India's main motive of close relationship with the U.S. is to play on Chinese fears of New Delhi's aligning with Washington in "anti-China" schemes to make Beijing understand India's sensitivities of China's increasing presence in the India Ocean Region (IOR) or in South Asia as a whole. India is particularly concerned over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which runs through Pakistan controlled Kashmir, China's nuclear and missile technology assistance to Pakistan, increasing naval presence in the Indian Ocean, construction of military ports along the Indian periphery, intrusions and assertive behavior on the Sino-Indian border, China's diversion of rivers which flow from China to India, etc. In the past, India did not have much influence to press China to halt such anti-India activities. However, in the present context, the emerging Indo-U.S. strategic partnership has increased India's influence vis-a-vis China which can be an effective instrument to pressurize China from becoming too assertive against Indian interests.
- Conversely, New Delhi also wants to play on U.S' fears over Beijing's military and economic ascent and thereby secure Washington's support and understanding

in making India a pre-eminent power in the region by enhancing its defense capabilities via transfer of advanced military hardware and technology. India also wants to secure U.S. support in various international elite bodies like getting the permanent membership in the UN Security Council.

Policy Options

- Just like China, India also aspires to emerge as one of the leading international actors - militarily, economically, and politically. Given this fact, in conjunction with other factors which have been dealt at length in the earlier chapters, India will not be interested in close alignment with the United States against China.
- The main objective of India's policy of forging a strategic partnership with the United States is to moderate China's behavior and accordingly compel her to accept a relationship compatible with India's basic security concerns.
- At the same time, Indian policy-makers are aware of the fact that too much closeness with Washington may be counter-productive to the Indian interests as it would compel Beijing to hurt Indian interests in a number of ways.
- It is also observed that New Delhi could be expected to move away from Washington if Beijing willingly accepts India's desired and rightful status in South Asia and in other international forums.

The U.S. Interests

- As noted in the preceding chapters, China's conflict with both India (over Pakistan and the border) and with the United States (over Taiwan, the U.S.' role in the world and the rise of China) are far deeper than the issues between New Delhi and the Washington. With these facts, it is observed that the U.S.' strategic interests lies in forging deep and closer strategic partnership with New Delhi in order to counter balance the rise of China in the long run.
- Though the Indo-U.S. strategic cooperation (which has its own dynamics and merits) cannot be attributed entirely to China, it emerges that China's rapid military and economic rise and thereby its ambitions constitute one important element of the new U.S.' inclination toward New Delhi.

Policy Options

- So far as the U.S. policy towards India and China is concerned, it will feel more comfortable with New Delhi than with Beijing. It would place greater stress on the importance and the role of India in the world and thereby treat India on equal terms with China.
- But at the same time, the U.S. policy-makers are not interested in forging a firm alliance with India against Beijing because doing so would put both New Delhi and Washington on antagonistic and hostile mode with China that would neither be in the interests of India nor in the interests of the United States.
- Moreover, as rightly pointed out by Harry Harding (a prominent U.S.-China expert) an active and formal New Delhi-Washington combination against Beijing could also imply a U.S. commitment to India's security that might be too costly for the U.S. It also means an Indian dependence on the U.S. that would be unacceptable to India.

Thus from the above discussion it can be concluded that the United States has emerged as a strong factor in the Sino-Indian relations in the post-Cold War period due to the fact that both China and India have been bidding against each other for the U.S. support. In other words, it can be said that the United States has emerged as a powerful external intervening variable in the complex Sino-Indian relationship. In this emerging triangular dynamics, the two Asian giants are caught in a security dilemma as one Asian giant's cooperation with the U.S. is perceived by other giant as going against her interests. Though the economic interdependence and convergence on various common issues has provided a solid ground for cooperation among the three powers, the security competition and the strategic distrust remains intact. The future course of relationship between China and India and thereby their relations with the United States will depend to a great extent on how China's leadership projects and uses its power and influence once it achieves its target of great power status. For example, will it treat India as a peer competitor in Asia and thereby work for its containment? Or will it accommodate and respect India's aspirations and interests in the South Asian? These are the questions which will determine much of the dynamics in Sino-Indian interactions. Similarly, if the United

States perceives (under power transition perspective) that China's final ascent is aimed at to displace the United States as an established power in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, it will align with its allies (Australia, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, etc.) and with strategic partners (India, Singapore, Philippines, etc.) to contain China. Such an eventuality will lead to an extremely destabilizing situation which will be a catastrophe for the regional and global peace and stability. To avert such a dangerous eventuality, the U.S. as a dominant intervening variable in the Sino-Indian relationship can play a constructive role if, it;

- treats India and China as rising powers and positively accepts that their rise would be defining feature in the twenty first century devoid of manifested suspicion particularly with China with whom many common interests do exit.
- forges close and cooperative relations with each of the Asian powers on the basis of its own merits devoid of zero-sum terms.
- and, more pertinently, nudge both New Delhi and Beijing to develop win-win relationship with each other and at the same time make it certain that its own relations with each of the two Asian giants will be better than each country's relation with other. It will ensure or at least subside Washington's suspicion or perceived apprehension of Sino-Indian alignment against the United States. It will ultimately reduce U.S.' game of playing-off one Asian rival against another which it has played on various occasions in the post-Cold War era.

Notes

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³ C. Raja Mohan, "The Strategic Triangle: India's Opportunities and Challenges", in Mingjang Li and Kalyan M. Kemburi (Eds.), *New Dynamics in U.S.-China Relations: Contending for Asia-Pacific*, Routledge, New York, 2014, p.208.

⁴ Susan V. Lawrence, *U.S.-China Relations: An Overview of Policy Issues*, Congressional Research Service, Washington, D.C., 1 August, 2013, p.3.

⁵ "India-China sign landmark border defense agreement to maintain peace at LAC", *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 14 March, 2014.

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